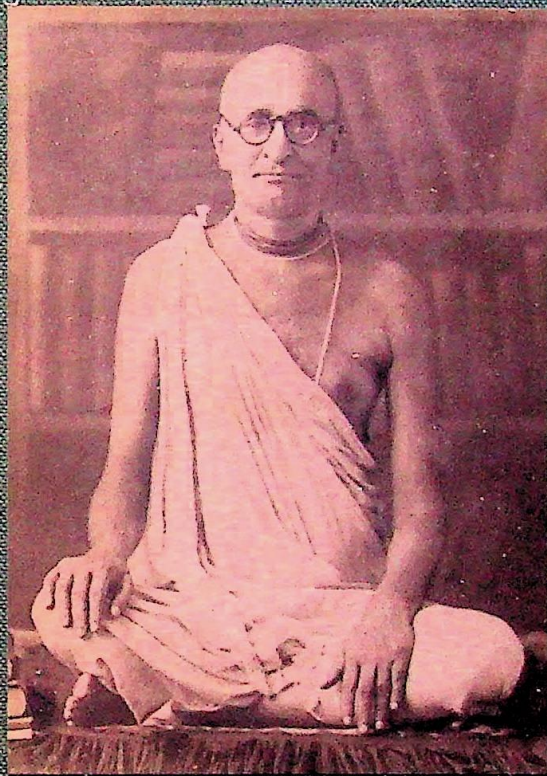


Of Love & Separation



Meditations on My Divine Master

MRS. HOLINESS SWAMI D.R. PURI



Of Love & Separation
"Saraswati is dear to Krishna.

His heart is full with Krishna bhakti.

*He is the veritable wealth
and expansion of Bhaktivinoda."*

"Saraswati is dear to Krishna.

His heart is full with Krishna bhakti.

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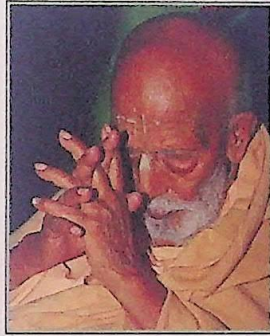
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A Bhakti Siddhanta Vani Publication

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HIS HOLINESS SWAMI B.P. PURI

Sri Bhakti Premade Puri



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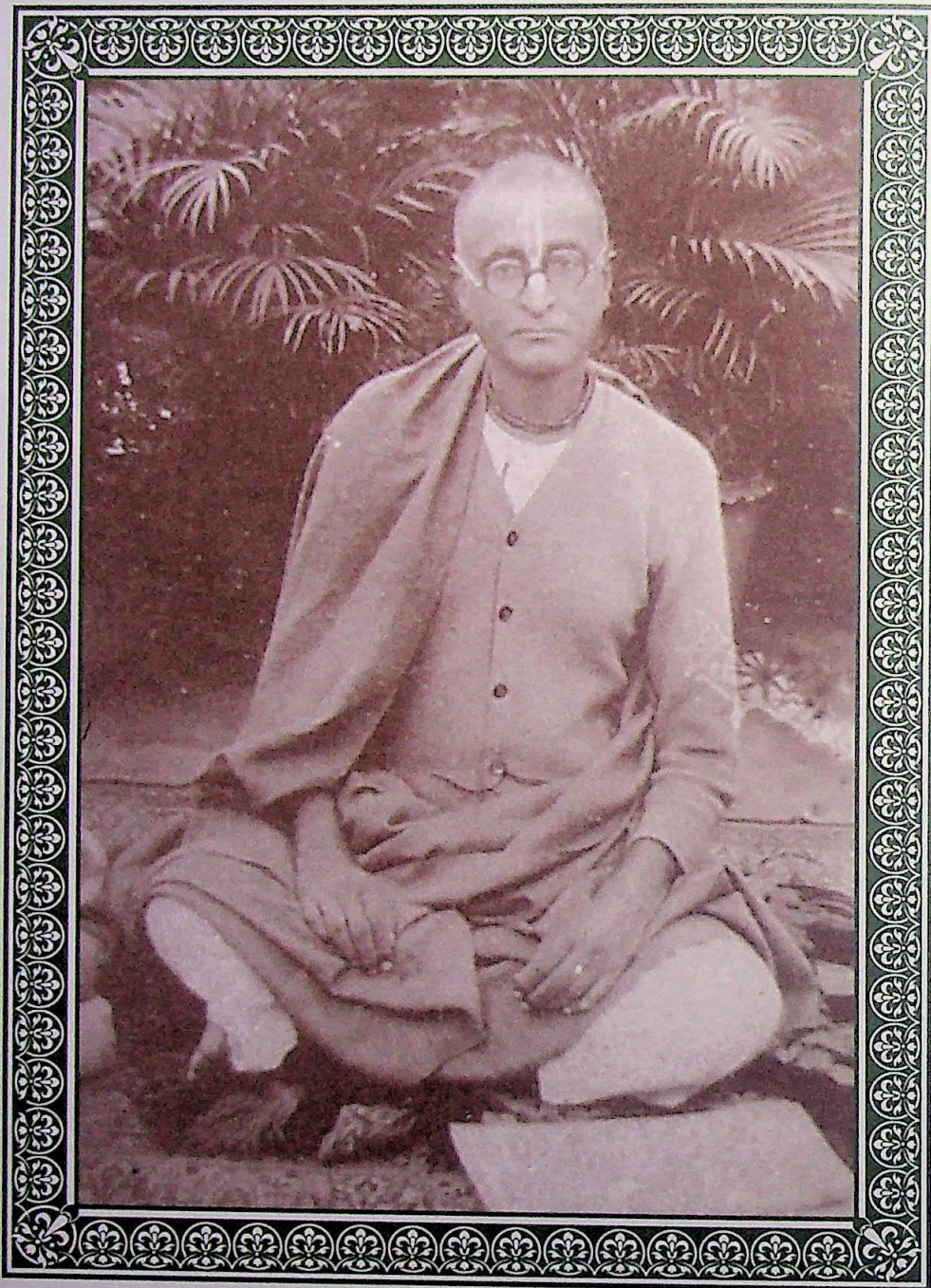
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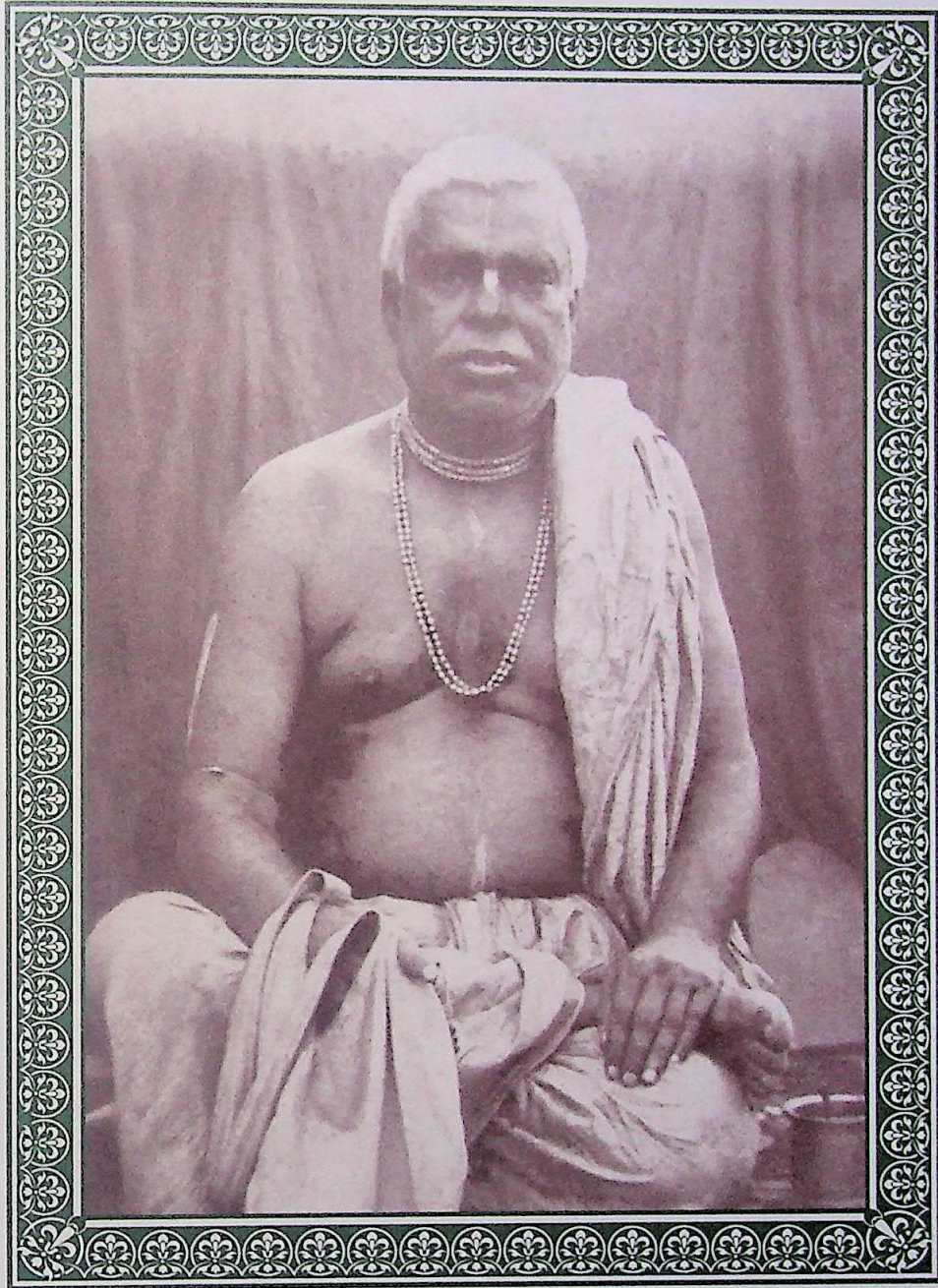
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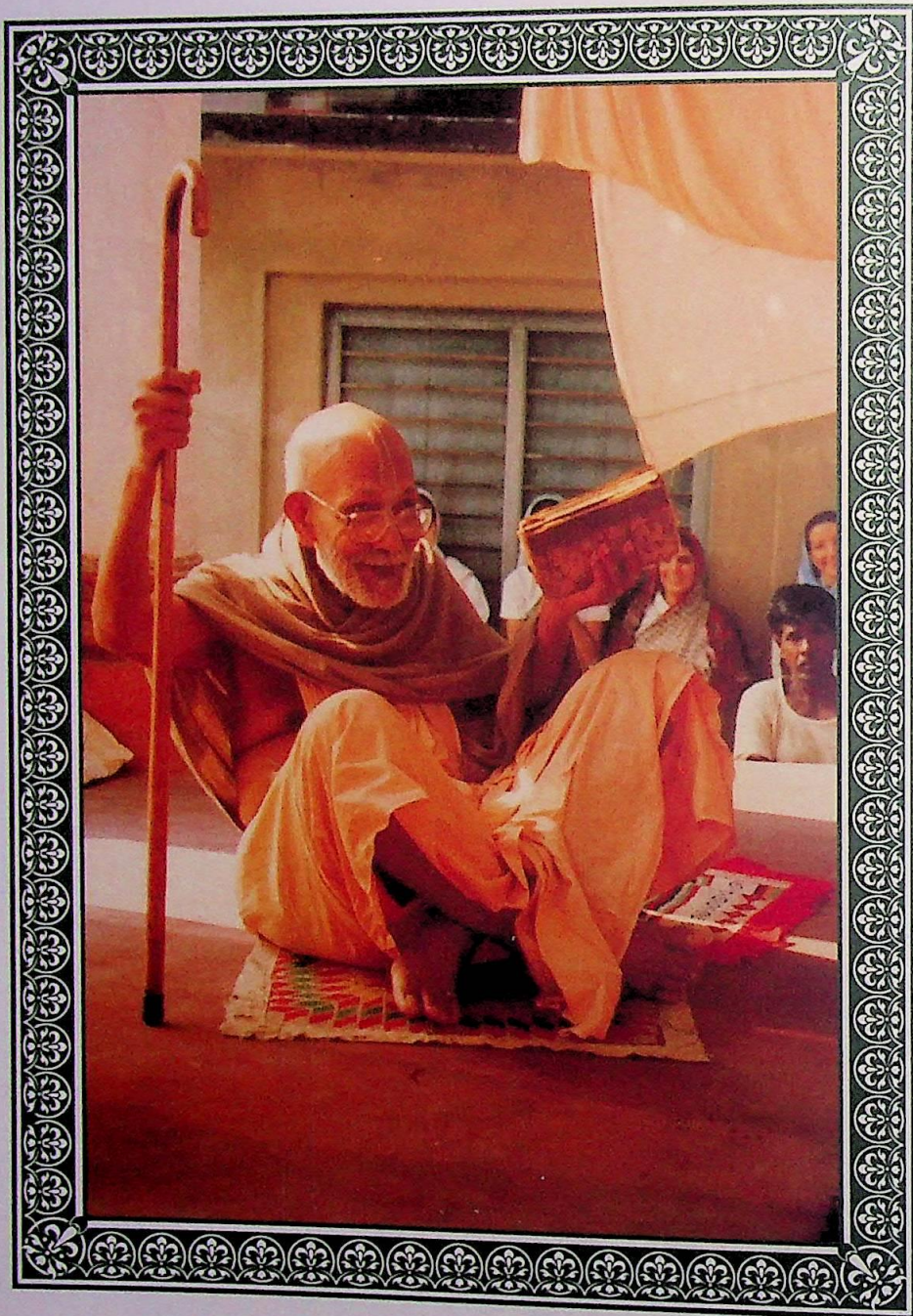


Jagad Guru Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur
"He who is constantly showing us how to serve Godhead, throughout life, is no other than our Sri Guru."



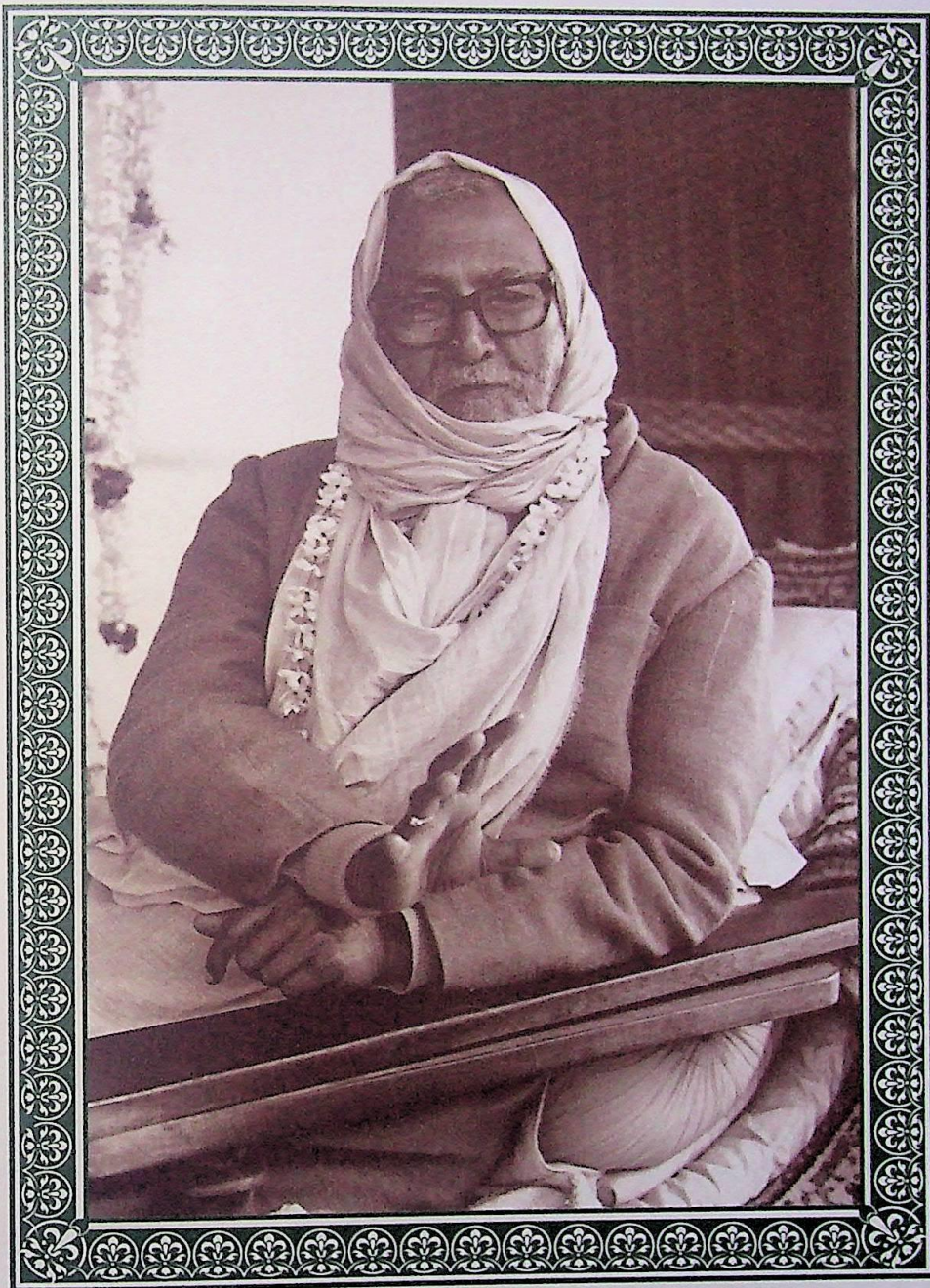
Srila Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakur

“... all kinds of superstitions and bad concepts are being called devotion...crush these anti-devotional conceptions by preaching pure devotion and by setting an example through your personal conduct.” — His divine orders to Srila Prabhupada.



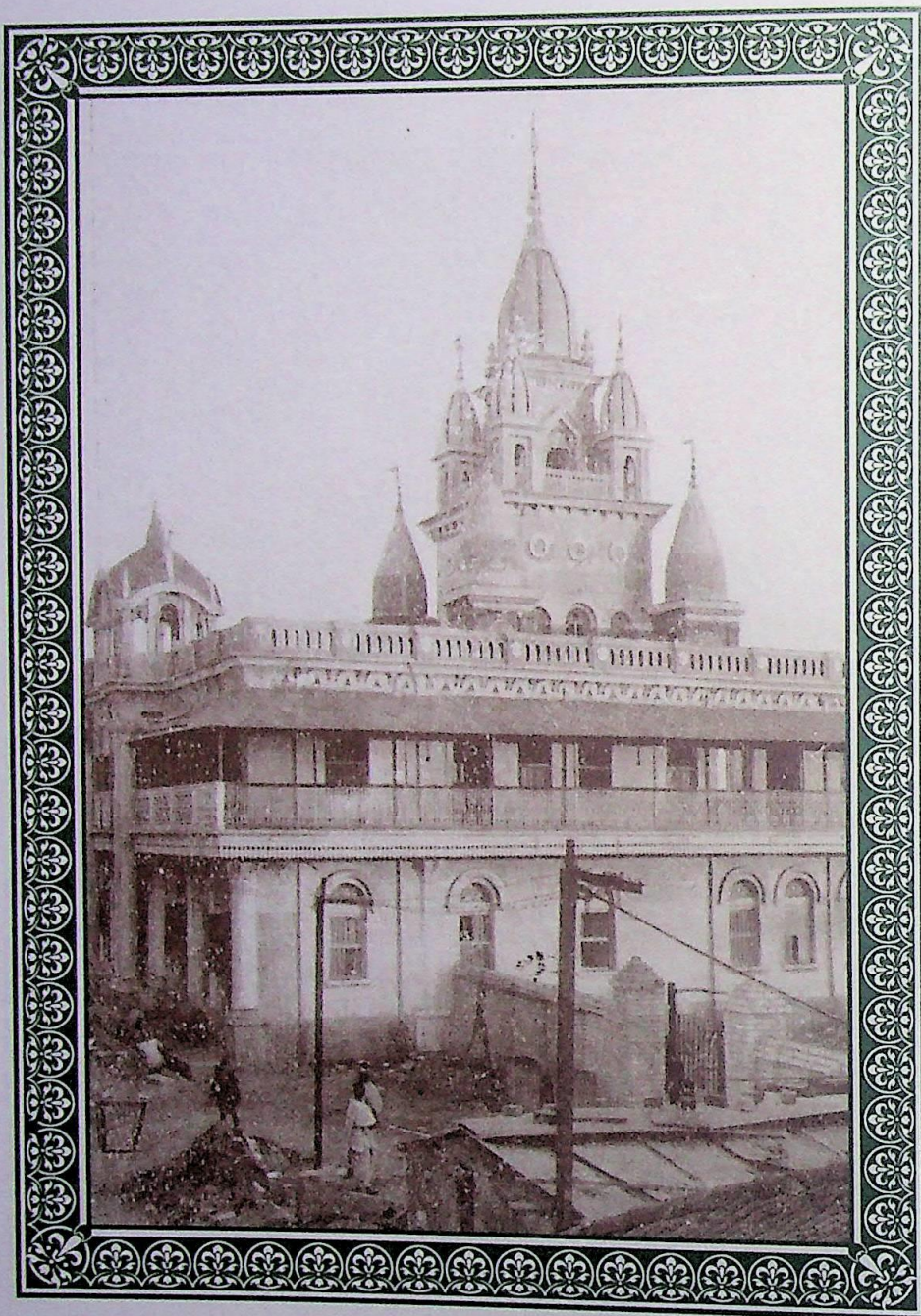
Om Vishnupada Sri Srimad Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj

"Service to the guru with affection and love is possible both in this world and in the next... By serving his teachings when he is no longer visible to our mundane perception, we can receive a vision of his transcendental form."

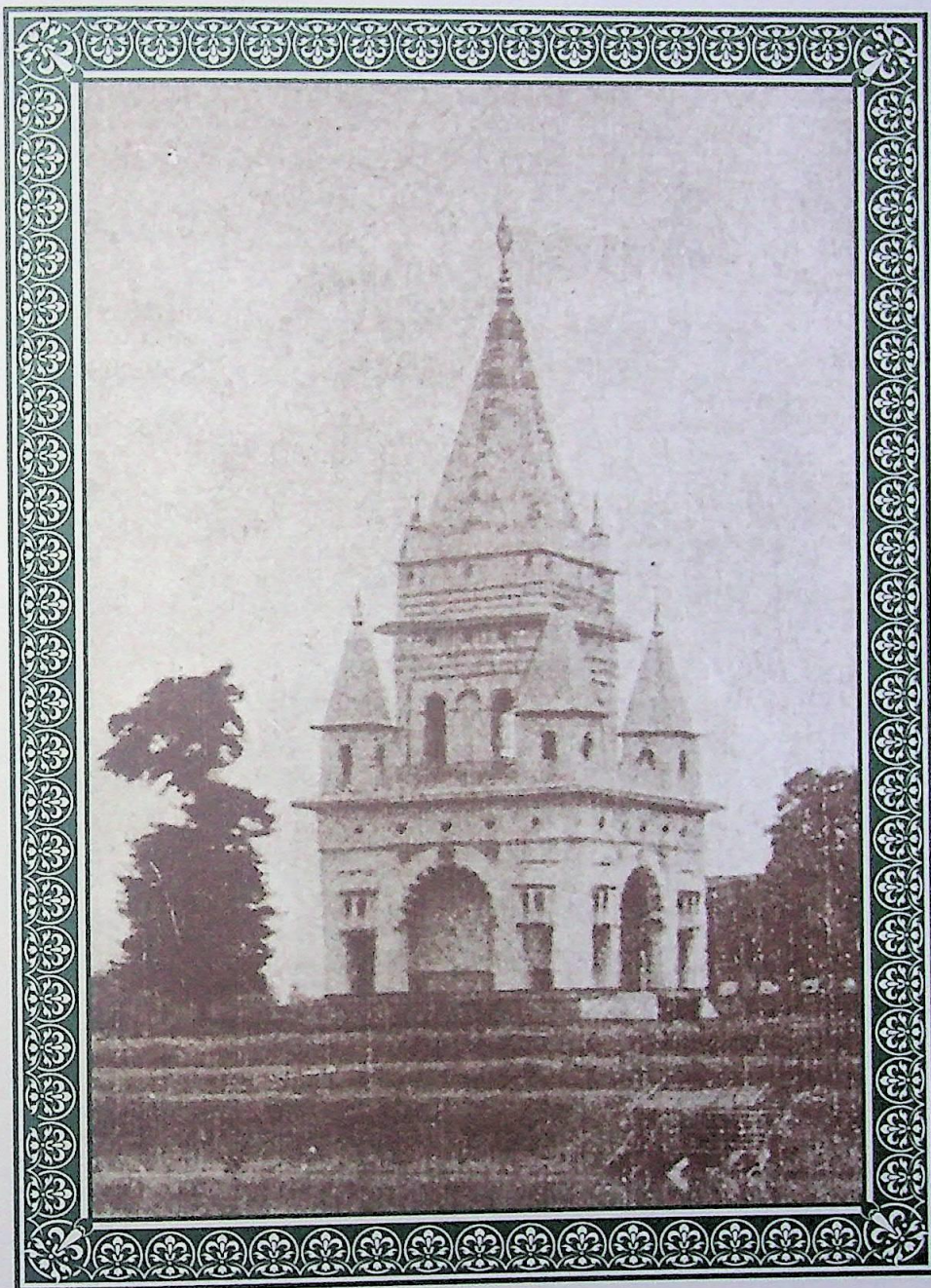


Om Vishnupada Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhardev Goswami Maharaj

"Prabhupada showed us by his ideal conduct how much earnestness one may have for Gurudeva. Gururvaika-nistha—exclusive adherence to the service of Sri Guru. Bhaktivinoda Thakur was his very being. Everything was Bhaktivinoda Thakur."

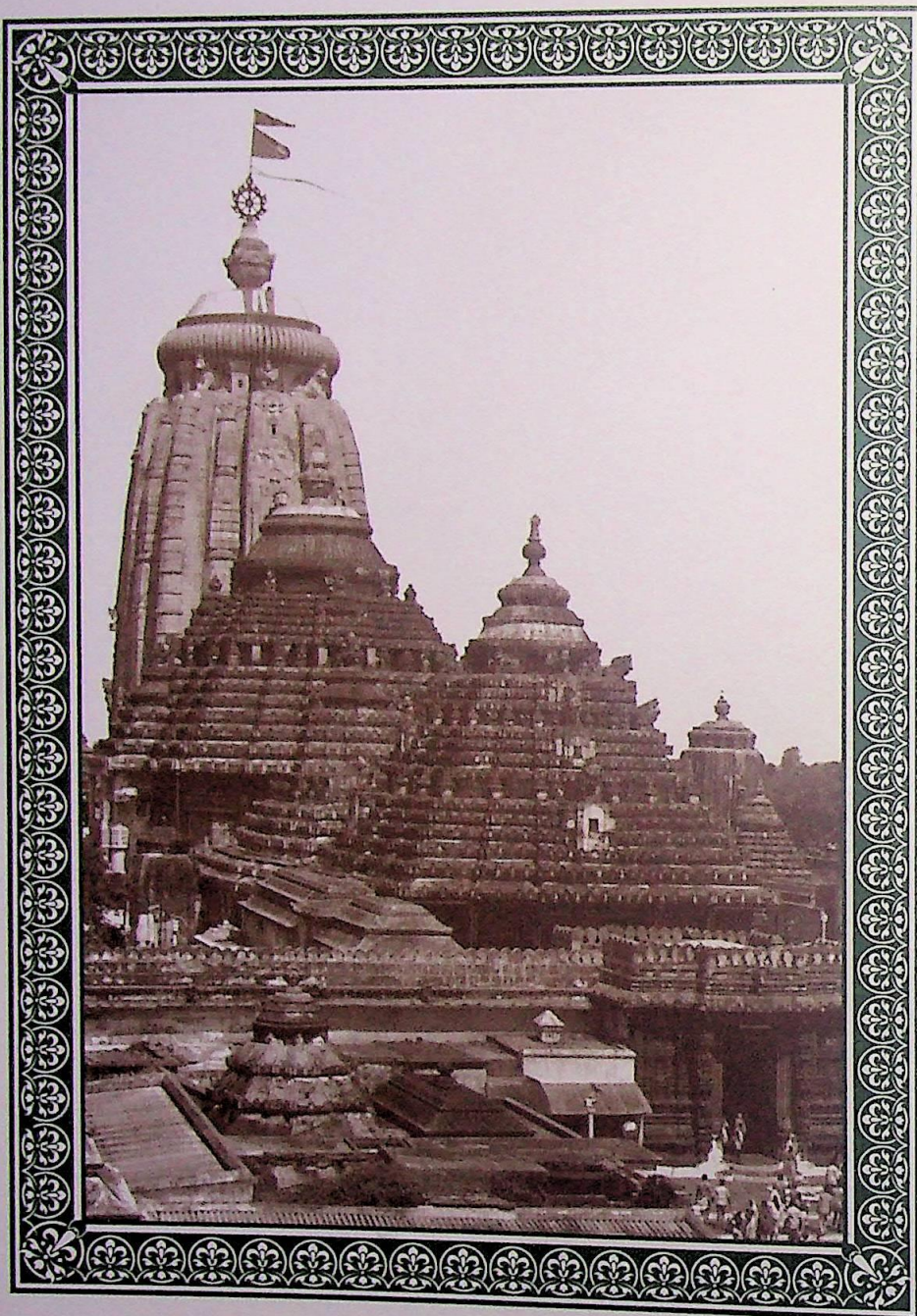


*The Bagh Bazaar Gaudiya Math
The Holy Disappearance place of Srila Prabhupada.*



Yoga Pith

*The Holy Appearance place of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu discovered
by Thakur Bhaktivinoda and serviced by Srila Prabhupada.*



Jagannath Temple

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu spent His last twenty-four years in this world in the abode of Lord Jagannath. At the end of their wordly pastimes Thakur Bhaktivinoda, Srila Prabhupada, and Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj also took shelter of "vipralambha kshetra".

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Preface

The root of all devotion is dedication to the guru. The path of pure devotion is one of absolute surrender and dependence on the divine guide, by whose grace one is enabled to overcome all personal deficiencies and obstacles and to ultimately attain the highest goal of life—love of Godhead. The guru is most dear to the Supreme Lord Himself and is thus His perfect representative. To bestow His mercy upon all those in the plight of conditioned existence, the Lord Himself sends His dear associate to this world. Thus the spiritual preceptor extends the grace of divinity by exhibiting the life of the devotee in his pure character and spiritual dealings, and also by expounding on sacred literatures for our enlightenment. He imparts the mantra and gives detailed instruction on the worship of the Divine Name. He is the protector, maintainer, and worshipable deity of the spiritual aspirant and all perfections ensue from sincerely following him. These points are all generally to be understood about the nature and role of guru.

Through these doors of understanding, the devoted disciple finds infinite ground and infinite truth evolving out of his sacred relationship with his guru. What is imparted in this collection of holy writings is the magic and divinity that is experienced through the real and untiring devotion of His Holiness Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj towards his eternal master, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. By reading, discussing, and remembering these wholly personal reflections we can cultivate the proper mood of dependence and loyalty to the instructions of the guru, so necessary for our own spiritual development.

It is easily recognisable from the words and example of Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj that he embraced a very exclusive and clearly defined line of devotion

that he inherited from his spiritual preceptor, Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. He continuously acknowledged the unique contribution and position Srila Prabhupada made to theistic thought over and over again in his writings. The very exalted path of *rāga-bhakti*, spontaneous loving devotion as expounded by Sri Chaitanya Deva and His immediate followers, was preserved and protected by the spiritual service of his guru. Srila Prabhupada was, in fact, the empowered representative of Srīman Mahāprabhu. He was not a humanitarian, politician, or mundane religious worker in any right. He was a general in the cause of the Divine Will and staunchly defended our true self-interest against all our many diverted and relative conceptions. Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur established the desires of Sri Svarupa, Rupa, Sanatan, Raghunath and Thakur Bhaktivinoda. He distinctly set forth the proper understanding of *sādhana-sādhya tattva*—proper understanding of the means and end of all spiritual endeavor, such that we would not be misguided in the approach to service to the Divine Couple.

Srila Prabhupada is the shelter and universal teacher for all those who accept the path of pure devotion in the wake of the followers of Sri Chaitanya. The invaluable gift that Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj had ventured to share in his expressions of devotion to his gurudeva and also in the hundreds of articles he wrote over a sixty year period are straightforward, realised, and caring instructions on the pure religion of the Bhagavata. Those who are sincere will not be deceived nor disappointed when confronted with his teachings. Rather, they will rejoice in the uncompromising spirit of truth living in the words and example of Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj as he has dedicated



his whole life to preserving the pure conceptions of devotion revealed by his worshipable gurudeva.

The articles contained in this book first appeared in the monthly journal, *Chaitanya Vāṇī*, the mouthpiece of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math. They were composed by His Holiness Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj as intimate offerings to His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur on the occasion of his annual Vyasa Puja celebrations. An original Bengali edition was compiled and published in 1992 by His Grace Bhakti Nandan Swami Maharaj.

In looking through the old editions of *Chaitanya Vāṇī*, we found several other poems that had not been included in the original Bengali edition. Since some of them contained valuable original material, we decided to produce an expanded edition. We did not feel it necessary to exhaustively edit the articles in such a way as to eliminate repetition and have decided to take each article as a meditation on the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupada. Thus, we have left them unchanged and given them in the same form that they first appeared in *Chaitanya Vāṇī*.

We should garland ourselves with this collection of heartfelt prayers and inspiring glimpses into the divine life of Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. If we take proper individual concern to examine our spiritual lives and practices—our worship of the Holy Name and the Divine Couple with the light of his instructions, and then share our successes with others, surely all fortune will descend upon us and the victory flag of Mahaprabhu's sankirtan will be erected for the benefit of all. We pray that by serving the readers and the Vaishnava community through preserving and sharing the teachings of Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj we will receive his unwarranted mercy and affection.

The Editor



Introduction

Over the years, I have made several attempts to set down in writing various aspects of the transcendental life of His Divine Grace, *nitya-līla-praviṣṭa* Om Vishnupada Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, my most worshipable spiritual master. These articles appeared in *Chaitanya Vāṇī*, the monthly magazine of the Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, founded by my godbrother, the late reverend Tridandi sannyasi Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj. I wanted to add to this series of articles, but since I am now 94 years old, I see that such an ambition will have to remain unfulfilled unless Srila Prabhupada bestows upon me his special, causeless mercy.

After Srila Prabhupada's disappearance, the editor of the weekly *Gauḍīya* magazine (who has now himself gone to the eternal abode) published a large number of valuable facts about Srila Prabhupada's life in *Sarasvatī-jaya-śrī*. Unfortunately, the article I composed for that volume was never published.

Our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada is most dear to Sri Krishna. His birth and activities are all transcendental and superhuman, like those of the Lord. So, in truth, they cannot be known by the foolish, but by the surrendered souls alone—*mūḍhair avedyam pranatābhigamyam*. He reveals the secrets of his pastimes to those who are sincerely surrendered to Krishna's lotus feet. Many fortunate devotees witnessed Srila Prabhupada's divine ecstasies as he spoke about Guru, Gauranga, Gandharvika and Giridhari. Upon seeing the tears filling his eyes and hearing the deep spiritual emotions trembling in his voice, the devotees themselves were barely able to hold back their own tears.

thunderbolt and softer than a rose. He could not tolerate words that opposed or misrepresented the pure devotional doctrines taught by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His dear associates, or those that misconstrued the proper portrayal of divine rasa (*rasābhāsa*). Throughout his life, he made an unflagging effort to establish consciousness in the jiva souls of their eternal nature as servants of Krishna. While speaking about Krishna, he would completely lose himself. Five books: Bhaktivinoda Thakur's *Śaraṇāgati*, *Kalyāṇa-kalpa-taru*, *Gītāvalī*, and Narottama's *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, were especially dear to Srila Prabhupada and he recited them daily.

From childhood on, his life was a glowing example of determination to serve the Holy Names and to preach their glories. He was never able to tolerate the arrogance of those who followed the path of meditation on one's own spiritual form while showing indifference to the Holy Name. Nor was he able to accept those who made an artificial effort to follow the path of *rāgānugā bhakti* while ignoring Mahaprabhu's instructions in the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* and those of Rupa Goswami in the *Upadeśāmṛta*. After establishing in us the proper foundation, he then conceded to advise us to maintain our effort to attain the supreme goal of life—love for Sri Krishna in the elevated, effulgent sweet mood of Vraja distributed by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He gave most precedence to Mahaprabhu's command, "In this age of Kali, the chanting of the Holy Names is the only means (*nāma-saṅkīrtana kalau parama upāya*)."

Srila Prabhupada was adorned by the four qualities mentioned in the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*'s *trṇād api* verse, and with these qualities he propagated the glories of the

Srila Prabhupada was simultaneously harder than a



Holy Name. He constantly warned us, his disciples, that we should not try to steal from the storehouse of religious experience and also that false renunciation is inimical to spiritual advancement. Srila Prabhupada recommended appropriate renunciation or *yukta-vairāgya*.

*kanaka-kāminī pratiṣṭhā-bāghinī
chāriyāche jāre se to vaiṣṇava
sei anāsakta sei śuddha bhakta
saṁsāra tathāya pāya parābhava*

A Vaishnava is one who has abandoned the tigress of desire for gold, women and worldly prestige. He is truly detached and thus a pure devotee. In him, the bondage of *samsara* is overcome. (*Vaiṣṇava ke?*)

Prabhupada considered material prestige to be detestable, comparing it to hog stool. He never sanctioned the impersonalist philosophy or devotion adulterated by *jnana*, *yoga* or *karma*, as these are in opposition to pure *bhakti*. He showed indomitable enthusiasm for preaching the Holy Name and Mahaprabhu's religion of love, from the oceans to the Himalaya Mountains and beyond. As a result, the fires of the sacrifice of the Holy Name were ignited and the victory flag of the Holy Name now waves in almost every corner of the world. So many thoughtful persons from the western countries have been fortunate to accept the spiritual ways of India.

Srila Prabhupada taught that every single living being is eligible to engage in the worship of the Lord. Everywhere he went, he loudly proclaimed that there is no consideration of ethnic background or race in devotional service. The essence of Srila Prabhupada's teachings is to sincerely take shelter of the genuine guru and make all efforts to engage in devotional service in the association of pure devotees. I myself heard Srila Prabhupada say to his disciples in regards to world peace that, "Genuine peace will never be established in this world without practicing and preaching the religion of love taught by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

When speaking about society's duty to educate its children, Prabhupada repeated the teachings of the great soul Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur,

*jara-vidyā jata māyāra vaibhava
tomāra bhajane bādha
moha janamiyā anitya saṁsāre
jivake karaye gādha*

"Material knowledge is the great power of the illusory energy and an impediment to pure devotional service. It creates an illusory attachment to *samsara* and turns a human being into an ass."

We should therefore take shelter of the Holy Name, for transcendental knowledge (*parā vidyā*), the opposite of material knowledge, follows the Holy Name like a faithful wife. These are the words used by Mahaprabhu—*vidyā-vadhū-jivanam*. In view of this, there is no need to attain any knowledge other than that which helps preach the glories of the Holy Name. We will never be able to remove the hatred, envy and enmity that exists between living beings unless we stop the use of human talents, science, arts, culture, commerce, ethics and religion as means for achieving sense gratification rather than for the highest goal of life. It is out of respect for his achievements in this domain that the pure devotee must be given the highest seat of honor in human society.

May we follow the path established by Sri Vyasadeva and Sukadeva with all our being! Then only will we be able to achieve our true goal. If we disregard the scriptures that are based on the realizations of the great devotional authorities, the false and deceptive paths that we accept will lead us to take up all sorts of improper activities in the name of religion. Prabhupada would therefore say:

*prthivī jata kathā dharma-nāme cale
bhāgavata kahe tāhā paripūrṇa chale*

So many things on earth are promoted in the name of religion, but the Bhagavatam says that they are nothing more than deception.



Introduction

We pray that Srila Prabhupada's message of auspiciousness will be spread throughout the world. This will destroy the atheism that is so destructive to our planet and establish a genuine theism for the benefit of all humanity. This will bring peace and auspiciousness to all.

Aspiring for the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupada,
Servant of the servant,

Sri Bhakti Promode Puri

Sri Bhakti Promode Puri



Invocation

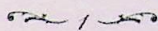
by

*His Divine Grace
Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Maharaj*

Sri-Prabhupada-Padma-Staraka

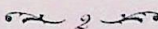
A hymn to Srila Prabhupada's lotus feet

by Sri Srimad Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhar Maharaj



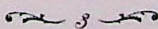
*sujanārbuda-rādhita-pāda-yugaṁ
yuga-dharma-dhurandhara-pātra-varam
varadābhaya-dāyaka-pūjya-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam*

His lotus feet are served in devotion by tens of thousands of highly virtuous souls; he is the establisher of the religion of the age (*śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*) and the presiding monarch of the Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha—the universal society of the pure devotees that are the true “kings” or guides of all; he fulfills the most cherished desires and dispels the fear of all souls. I constantly make my obeisance unto the radiance emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada, worshipable by one and all.



*bhajanorjjita-sajjana-saṅgha-patīm
patitādhika-kāruṇikaika-gatim
gati-vañcita-vañcakācintya-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam*

He is the leader of the fortunate souls blessed with the treasure of internal pure devotion; he is greatly merciful upon the fallen souls, being their only shelter and his holy feet are inconceivable to the deceivers who are thus deprived of spiritual beatitude. I constantly make my obeisance to the radiance emanating from the toenails of the holy feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada.

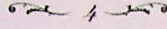


*atikomala-kāñcana-dīrgha-tanuṁ
tanu-nindita-hema-mṛṇāla-madam
madanārbuda-vandita-candra-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam*

I make my obeisance unto his divine, charming yet commanding lofty form of golden hue. That beautiful figure shames the mad ecstasy of golden lotus stems. Venerated by tens of millions of Cupids, the moons of the toenails of my worshipful Divine Master reveal the beauty of his lotus feet. I constantly make my obeisance

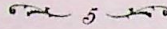


unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the lotus feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada.



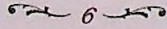
nija-sevaka-tāraka-rañji-vidhum
vidhutāhita-huñkṛta-simha-varam
varaṇāgata-bāliśa-śanda-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

Like the moon that delights the stars, he delights the circle of personal servitors who surround him; the sound of his thunderous lion's roar sets to flight all inauspiciousness; while the simple, inoffensive souls attain the ultimate peace by accepting his lotus feet. I constantly make my obeisance unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the lotus feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada.



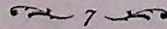
vipulikṛta-vaibhava-gaura-bhuvam
bhuvaneṣu vikīrtita-gaura-dayam
dayanīya-gaṇārpita-gaura-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

He has expanded the glorious abundance of the land of Gaura's birth; he has broadcast the tidings of Sri Gauranga's supreme magnanimity throughout the whole universe; and in the hearts of the fit recipients of his grace, he has bestowed the gift of Sri Gaura's lotus feet. I constantly make my obeisance unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the lotus feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada.



cira-gaura-janāśraya-viśva-gurum
guru-gaura-kaiśoraka-dāśya-param
paramāḍṛta-bhaktivinoda-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

He is the long awaited shelter and Universal Guru for the souls surrendered unto Sri Gauranga; he is absorbed in the service of his Gurudeva, Sri Gaura Kishor Das Babaji; he wholeheartedly adores Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur. I perpetually make my obeisance unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the lotus feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada.



raghu-rūpa-sanātana-kīrti-dharam
dharanī-tala-kīrtita-jīva-kavim
kavirāja-narottama-sakhya-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

He is the illustrious personality who raises the flag that attests to the glory of Sri Rupa, Sri Sanatan, and Sri



Invocation

Raghunath Das; he sings the glories of the powerful personality of brilliant erudition, Sri Jiva, throughout the world; and he has won the renown of being one with the hearts of Srila Krishna Das Kaviraja Goswami and Narottama Das Thakur. I perpetually make my obeisance unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the lotus feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada.

8

*kṛpayā hari-kīrtana-mūrti-dharam
dharanī-bhara-hāra-ka-gaura-janam
janakādhiśa-vatsala-snigdha-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam*

Bestowing his grace upon all souls, he is Hari kīrtan incarnate. As the associate of Sri Gaura, he relieves Mother Earth of the burden of offences committed upon her. He is so gracious that his loving warmth to all beings excels even that of a father. I perpetually make my obeisance unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the lotus feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada.

9

*śaraṇāgata-kīṅkara-kalpa-tarum
taru-dhik-kṛta-dhīra-vadānya-varam
varadendra-gaṇārcita-divya-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam*

He is a wish-fulfilling tree for his surrendered servitors, fulfilling their heart's aspiration; even a tree is shamed by his magnanimity and forbearance. Even the gods who confer boons on all worship his lotus feet. I perpetually make my obeisance unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the lotus feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada.

10

*parahamśa-varam paramārtha-patim
patitoddharāṇe kṛta-veśa-yatim
yati-rāja-gaṇaiḥ pariṣevya-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam*

He is the crown jewel of the paramahamsas, prince of the supreme perfection of life, Sri Krishna prema. He accepted the robes of a mendicant sannyasi just to deliver the fallen souls and is attended by the topmost tri-ḍaṇḍi-sannyāsis. I perpetually make my obeisance unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the lotus feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada.

11

*vṛṣabhānu-sutā-dayitānucaram
caraṇāśrita-reṇu-dharas tam aham*



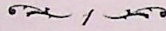
mahad-adbhuta-pāvana-śakti-padam
praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

He is the dearest, most intimate follower of the Divine Daughter of Vrishabhanu, and I know myself as most fortunate by taking the dust of his holy feet upon my head. I make my obeisance unto his invincible, wondrously purifying lotus feet; I perpetually make my obeisance unto the effulgence emanating from the toenails of the lotus feet of my Lord, Srila Prabhupada.

Sri-Dayita-Dasa-Pranati-Pancakam

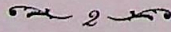
Five prayers of obeisance to the servant of Radha's lover

by Sri Srimad Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhar Maharaj



bhaya-bhañjana-jaya-śamsana-karuṇāyata-nayanam
kanakotpala-janakojjvala-rasa-sāgara-cayanam
mukharī-kṛta-dharaṇī-tala-hari-kīrtana-rasanam
kṣiti-pāvana-bhava-tārana-pihitāruṇa-vasanam
śubhadodaya-divase vṛṣaravijā-nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca caraṇāntika-paricāraka-sahitam

On the holy day of his advent, I bow down again and again unto that beloved associate of Sri Vrishabhanu Nandini and the servitors of his lotus feet. His large merciful eyes dispel the suffering souls' fear and proclaim the surrendered souls' victory; his divine form came forth from the birthplace of the golden lotus—the ocean of the mellow of divine consorhood; his tongue causes the whole Earth planet to constantly vibrate with Krishna sankirtan, and dressed in robes of the sun's radiance (saffron), he purifies the universe and dispels the suffering of material existence.

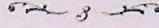


śaraṇāgata-bhajana-vrata-cira-pālana-caraṇam
sukṛtālaya-saralāśaya-sujanākhila-varaṇam
hari-sādhana-kṛta-bādhana-jana-śāsana-kalanam
sa-carācara-karuṇākara-nikhilāśiva-dalanam
śubhadodaya-divase vṛṣaravija-nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca caraṇāntika-paricāraka-sahitam

On the holy day of his advent, I bow down again and again unto that beloved associate of Sri Vrishabhanu

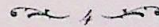
Invocation

Nandini and the servitors of his lotus feet. Devotees surrendered in pure devotion and fixed in the worship of the Lord are eternally protected at his lotus feet; he is worshipable by the pure souls endowed with sincerity and good fortune, and he accepts even those who obstruct the service of Sri Hari, just to rectify them. As the very fountainhead of mercy upon all mobile and immobile beings, he crushes the inauspiciousness of the whole universe.



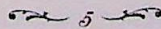
*atilaikika-gatitaulika-rati-kautuka-vapuṣam
atidaivata-mativaiṣṇava-yati-vaibhava-puruṣam
sa-sanātana-raghu-rūpaka-paramānuga-caritam
suvicāraka iva jīvaka iti sādhubhir uditam
śubhadodaya-divase vṛṣaravija-nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca caraṇāntika-paricāraka-sahitam*

On the holy day of his advent, I bow down again and again unto that beloved associate of Sri Vrishabhanu Nandini and the servitors of his lotus feet. Like a miracle, his body moves with a joyful elegance and charm beyond the world's understanding, fulfilling the artist's aspiration. His intellect surpasses that of even the demigods, and he is nobility incarnate as the commander-in-chief of the Vaishnava sannyasis. The sadhus of profound intellect describe the nature of his personality as meticulously in the line of Sri Sanatan, Sri Rupa and Sri Raghunath, and they speak of him as being superbly replete in perfect theistic conclusions like Sri Jiva Goswami.



*sarasi-taṭa-sukhadotāja-nikāṭa-priya-bhajanam
lalitā-mukha-lalanā-kula-paramādara-yajanam
vraja-kānana-bahu-mānana-kamala-priya-nayanam
guṇa-mañjarī-garimā-guṇa-hari-vāsana-vayanam
śubhadodaya-divase vṛṣaravija-nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca caraṇāntika-paricāraka-sahitam*

On the holy day of his advent, I bow down again and again unto that beloved associate of Sri Vrishabhanu Nandini and the servitors of his lotus feet. On the bank of Sri Radha Kund at Svananda Sukhada Kunja, he is devoted to the service of his Beloved, and furthermore, he is greatly endeared to the divine damsels of Vraja headed by Lalita. He is most favored by Kamala Manjari, who is pre-eminent in Vrindavan, and weaves the cloth of Sri Hari's desires with the glorious qualities of Guna Manjari.



*vimalotsavam amalotkala-puruṣottama-jananam
patitoddhṛti-karuṇāstṛti-kṛta-nūtana-pulinam
mathurā-pura-puruṣottama-sama-gaura-pur-aṭanam
hari-kāmaka-hari-dhāmaka-hari-nāmaka-ratanam
śubhadodaya-divase vṛṣaravija-nija-dayitam
praṇamāmi ca caraṇāntika-paricāraka-sahitam*

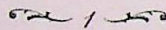


On the holy day of his advent, I bow down again and again unto that beloved associate of Sri Vrishabhanu Nandini and the servitors of his lotus feet. He appeared on the day of Vimala Devi's festival in Purushottam Kshetra in the holy land of Orissa, and he revealed his pastimes of delivering the fallen souls and extending his mercy upon them by awarding them the gift of divine love at the new isles (Nabadwip). Circumambulating Gaura Dham in the same way as traditionally done at Vraja Dham and Purushottam Dham, he continuously propagated the loving desires of Vraja, the divine abode of Vaikuntha and the holy name of Krishna.

Sri-Sri-Dayita-Dasa-Dasakam

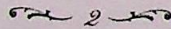
Ten verses of praise to the servant of Radha's lover

by Sri Srimad Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhar Maharaj



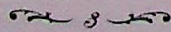
nīte yasmin niśānte nayana-jala-bharaiḥ snāta-gātrārbudānām
uccair utkrośatām śrī-vṛṣakapi-sutayādhīrayā svīya-goṣṭhīm
pṛthvī gādhāndhakāir hr̥ta-nayana-mañivāvṛtā yena hīnā
yatrāsau tatra śīghram kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatām kiṅkaro'yam

When the impatient daughter of Vrishabhanu suddenly took him into Her entourage at the end of that night, thousands of us let loose a great cry of lamentation and we bathed our bodies in tears. When he was thus stolen away, this world was plunged into deep darkness, as though the jewel of its eyes had fled away.¹ O my tear-filled eyes (*kṛpaṇa-nayana*)! [or, "O you who show the way to the most fallen (*kṛpaṇa-nayana*)!"] Please quickly lead this servitor to wherever that great soul may be!



yasya śrī-pāda-padmāt pravahati jagati prema-pīyūṣa-dhārā
yasya śrī-pāda-padma-cyuta-madhu satatām bhṛtya-bhṛṅgān bibharti
yasya śrī-pāda-padmaṁ vraja-rasika-jano modate samprašasya
yatrāsau tatra śīghram kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatām kiṅkaro'yam

From his lotus feet, the nectarean river of divine love flows throughout the universe; the honey from his lotus feet maintains the lives of his bee-like servitors; and the pure devotees in the shelter of the confidential mellows of Vraja revel in the bliss of singing the glories of his lotus feet. O *kṛpaṇa-nayana*! Please quickly lead this servitor to wherever that great soul may be!

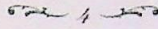


vātsalyam yac ca pitror jagati bahu-mataṁ kaitavam kevalam tat
dāmpatyam dasyutaiva svajana-gaṇa-kṛtā bandhutā vañcaneti

Invocation

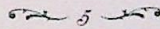
*vaikuntha-sneha-mūrteḥ pada-nakha-kiraṇair yasya sandarśito'smi
yatrāsau tatra śighraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatām kinkaro'yam*

Parental affection, so highly esteemed in the world, is a colossal hoax (for it is an obstacle to Hari-bhakti); socially recognized pure matrimonial love is nothing but dacoity (in that it plunders away both the husband's and the wife's eagerness for the chance to acquire the treasure of love unadulterated by superficial family prejudices); and common friendship is merely deception: I have gleaned these thoughts from the rays of light that emanate from the toenails of the holy feet of that great personality, the embodiment of supramundane affection. O *kṛpaṇa-nayana*! Please quickly lead this servitor to wherever that great soul may be!



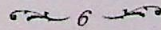
*yā vāṇī kaṇṭha-lagnā vilasati satatām kṛṣṇa-caitanya-candre
kaṇa-kroḍāj janānām kim u nayana-gatām saiva mūrṭim prakāśya
nīlādṛśasya netrārpaṇa-bhavana-gatā netra-tārābhidheyā
yatrāsau tatra śighraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatām kinkaro'yam*

The divine message sung by Sri Krishna Chaitanya had its continuous play in the ears of the people. Has that message taken a form and to make itself visible to the eyes of the world, advented in a house within the sight of Jagannath, the Lord of Nilachala, just to fulfill the purport of the name "Nayana-mani"? O *kṛpaṇa-nayana*! Please quickly lead this servitor to wherever that great soul may be!



*gaurendor asta-śaile kim u kanaka-ghano hema-hṛj-jambu-nadyā
āvirbhūtaḥ pravaraṣair nikhila-jana-padam plāvayan dāva-dagdham
gaurāvirbhāva-bhūmau rajasi ca sahasā saṁjugopa svayam svam
yatrāsau tatra śighraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatām kinkaro'yam*

Drawing up the pure golden waters of the Jambu River mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam, has this golden cloud arisen on the mountain where the golden moon (Sri Gaurachandra) set, just to shower down torrents of rain upon a world scorched by the forest fire of threefold sufferings? And has he now suddenly concealed himself again in the dust of the land where Sri Gauranga appeared? O *kṛpaṇa-nayana*! Please quickly lead this servitor to wherever that great soul may be!



*gauro gaurasya śiṣyo gurur api jagatām gāyatām gaura-gāthā
gaude gaudīya-goṣṭhy-āśrita-gaṇa-garimā drāviḍe gaura-garvī
gāndharvā gaura-vatyō giri-dhara-parama-preyasām yō garīṣṭho
yatrāsau tatra śighraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatām kinkaro'yam*

He is of the same hue as Sri Gaura, and although he, who sings the tidings of Sri Gaura, is the natural guru of the whole universe, he became a disciple of the great devotee named Sri Gaura Kishor. In Gauda-mandala, he is the pride of those who grant entrance into the fold of pure Gaudiya Vaishnavism, while in South India, he



is the proud representative of Gaura. The glory of his dignity shines even in the group of Sri Gandharva, and he holds a pre-eminent position in the intimate circle of Sri Giridhari, that is, he is the most beloved of Lord Mukunda. O *kṛpāṇa-nayana*! Please quickly lead this servitor to wherever that great soul may be!

~ 7 ~

*yo rādhā-kṛṣṇa-nāmāmṛta-jala-nidhināplāvayad viśvam etad
āmleccha-śeṣa-lokaṁ dvija-nṛpa-vaṇijaṁ śūdra-śūdrāpakṛṣṭam
muktaiḥ siddhair agamyaḥ patita-jana-sakho gaura-kāruṇya-śaktir
yatrāsau tatra śighraṁ kṛpāṇa-nayana he nīyatām kiṅkaro'yam*

He inundated the whole universe of countless living beings—whether brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya, shudra, less than shudra or even mleccha—with the oceanic nectar of the holy names of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna. Although unapproachable by the liberationists and the yogic perfectionists, he is known as the friend of the fallen, the mercy potency of Sri Gauranga. O *kṛpāṇa-nayana*! Please quickly lead this servitor to wherever that great soul may be!

~ 8 ~

*apy āśā vartate tat purāṇa-vara-vapur lokituṁ loka-śandaṁ
dīrghaṁ nīlābja-netraṁ tila-kusuma-nāsaṁ ninditārdhendubhālam
saumyaṁ śubhrāṁśu-dantaṁ śata-dala-vadanam dīrgha-bāhuṁ vareṇyam
yatrāsau tatra śighraṁ kṛpāṇa-nayana he nīyatām kiṅkaro'yam*

Do I have a hope to ever see that beautiful golden personality who makes everything auspicious for the world? Do I have a hope to ever behold that tall figure once again, those blue lotus eyes, that nose shaped like a sesame flower, the forehead that shames the half moon, the graceful lotus face, gleaming pearl-white teeth, and long arms extending to his knees? O *kṛpāṇa-nayana*! Please quickly lead this servitor to wherever that great soul may be!

~ 9 ~

*gaurābde śūnya-bāṇānvita-nigamam ite kṛṣṇa-pakṣe caturthyāṁ
pauṣe-māse maghāyāṁ amara-gaṇa-guror vāsare vai niśānte
dāso yo rādhikāyā atisaya-dayito nitya-līlā-praviṣṭo
yatrāsau tatra śighraṁ kṛpāṇa-nayana he nīyatām kiṅkaro'yam*

In the year 450 of the era of our Lord Gauranga, in the month of Paush, on the fourth day of the dark fortnight of the moon in the star of Magh, at the closing of Thursday night,² that most beloved attendant of Srimati Vrishabhanu Nandini entered into the eternal pastimes. O *kṛpāṇa-nayana*! Please quickly lead this servitor to wherever that great soul may be!

~ 10 ~

*hā-hā-kārair janānāṁ guru-carāṇa-juṣāṁ pūrita-bhūr-nabhaś ca
yato'sau kutra viśvaṁ prabhu-pada-virahād dhanta śūnyāyitam me*

Invocation

*pādābje nitya-bhṛtyaḥ kṣaṇam api virahaṁ notsahe sodhum atra
yatrāsau tatra śīghraṁ kṛpaṇa-nayana he nīyatām kinkaro'yam*

The entire earth and skies were filled with the cries of anguish of the disciples devoted to the service of Sri Gurudeva's lotus feet. Where has that Great Master gone? Alas! In separation from my Lord's lotus feet, the whole universe seems empty to me. An eternal servant of the spiritual master cannot endure his separation for even a moment. O *kṛpaṇa-nayana*! Please quickly lead this servitor to wherever that great soul may be!

¹ *nayana-mani*, "jewel of the eye," is also Srila Prabhupada's internal name.

² i.e. Friday morning, 5:30 a.m., January 1, 1937.



*Offerings
of Love & Separation*

~ by ~

*His Divine Grace
Srila Bhakti Premodé Puri Goswami*

Prabhupada's Divine Appearance

Mahaprabhu could not tolerate hearing anything that contradicted the pure spirit of devotion. For this reason, He always had Svarupa Damodar read everything before He Himself listened to it. For the very same reason, He arranged for Bhaktivinoda Thakur to take responsibility for the Jagannath temple in Puri for a period of five years (1871-1875). It was during this time that Srila Prabhupada took birth.

In the Bhagavad Gita (4.9), the Supreme Lord describes His own birth and activities while in the world as divine or *divya*. Both Ramanujacharya and Madhusudana Saraswati have commented on this word, defining it as “transcendental” (*aprākṛta*). Sridhar Swami uses the word *alaukika*, or “supramundane,” while Visvanath Chakravarti holds that the two words ultimately mean the same thing. The worlds (*loka*) are created by nature (*prakṛti*); therefore something that is “not of this world” (*alaukika*), is then “beyond nature” or transcendental (*aprākṛta*). Thus, the essence of the Lord’s words is that His birth and activities are to be understood as being beyond the qualities or modes of material nature; as such, it is self-evident that they are eternal in nature.

In the *Puruṣa-bodhinī Upaniṣad*, the following verse is found:

*eko devo nitya-līlānurakto
bhakta-vyāpī bhakta-hṛdy antarātmā*

“There is one Supreme Lord who is engaged in eternal pastimes. He pervades the hearts of His devotees as their innermost self.”

The word *nitya* or eternal appears frequently in the

Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta.

Therefore, just as the appearance and activities of the Supreme Lord are divine, transcendental, supramundane and eternal, so too are the appearance and activities of the Lord’s manifest representative, the spiritual master.

Bhaktivinoda Thakur decided to name his son Bimala Prasad (*Vimalā-prasāda*) after the goddess Bimala, Lord Jagannath’s divine energy or *Yogamaya* potency. The word *prasāda* means mercy or blessing. Without Her mercy, it is impossible for anyone to enter into His holy dham or into the mysteries of His pastimes along with His name, form, qualities, associates and their special characteristics. Srila Prabhupada was the incarnation of that mercy.

In his *Kalyāṇa-kalpa-taru*, Bhaktivinoda Thakur submits the following prayer to *Yogamaya*:

*āmāra samāna hīna nāhi e saṁsāre
asthira hayechi pari bhava-pārāvāre*

“No one in this world is as lowly as myself. I am greatly disturbed at having fallen into this great ocean of matter.

*kula-devī yogamāyā more kṛpā kari
āvaraṇa saṁvaribe kae viśvodarī*

“Yogamaya, you have been my family’s worshipable deity for generations. You hold this entire universe in your belly; please remove the illusion that covers me.

*śunechi āgame vede mahimā tomāra
śrī-kṛṣṇa-vimukhe bāndhi karāo saṁsāra*



Of Love & Separation

"I have heard your glories in the Tantras and the Vedas. I have also heard there that you create the material world by turning us away from Krishna and binding us.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa sammukhya jāra bhāgya-krame haya
tānre mukti diyā kara aśoka abhaya*

"You grant liberation to those who through some great fortune turn toward Krishna, making them fearless and free from lamentation.

*e dāse janani kari akaitava dayā
vṛndāvane deha sthāna tumi yogamāyā*

"O Mother! Give me, your servant, your unadulterated blessings. Give me a place in Vrindavan, where you are present as Yogamaya.

*tomāke laṅghiyā kothā jīve kṛṣṇa pāya
kṛṣṇa rāsa prakāṣita tomāra kṛpāya*

"What living being can attain Krishna by ignoring you? You are the one who made the *rāsa-līlā* possible.

*tumi kṛṣṇa-sahacarī jagata-janani
tumi dekhāile more kṛṣṇa-cintāmaṇi*

"You are both the mother of the universe and Krishna's close companion. You are the one who has shown me Krishna's spiritual world.

*niṣkapaṭa haye mātā cāo mora pane
vaiṣṇave viśvāsa vṛddhi hauk pratikṣaṇe*

"Mother, be direct with me. Look to me and give me increased faith in the Vaishnavas at every moment.

*vaiṣṇava-carāṇa vinā bhava-pārāvāra
bhaktivinoda nāre haibāre pāra*

"Bhaktivinoda cannot cross over the material ocean without the blessings of the devotees."

In the *Nārada-pañcarātra*, in the course of the con-

versations between the personified Upanishads and Vidya Devi, the following verse is found:

*ekeyaṁ prema-sarvasva-
svabhāvā gokuleśvarī
asyā āvarikā śaktir
mahāmāyākhileśvarī*

"Anamśā is the name of the mistress of Gokula. She is unique and Her nature is to be full of divine love. The potency that covers Her and is mistress of the entire material world is called Mahamaya. Yogamaya is beyond the three qualities of matter, while Mahamaya is the mistress of these three qualities."

The Supreme Lord is the master of His energy, known as Maya. Maya is of two types: She either enchants those who turn toward Krishna or bewilders those who have turned away from Him. As the enchantress of the devotees, She is the goddess of Gokula; She is Krishna's spiritual energy or *cic-chakti* and is known as Yogamaya. Her partial expansion is the material energy, which bewilders those reluctant to serve the Lord. She is also known as Mahamaya and She is the goddess of the limitless material worlds.

*viṣṇor māyā bhagavatī
yayā sammohitaṁ jagat
ādiṣṭāḥ prabhunāmsena
kāryārthe sambhaviṣyati*

"The Lord's own potency, the goddess Vishnumaya, enchants both the material and spiritual universes. She has been requested by the Lord to appear with Her partial expansion, the external energy Mahamaya, in order to execute some specific tasks for Him."
(SB 10.1.25)

The specific tasks of Maya referred to are explained as follows: As the internal potency, Yogamaya, she was to transfer Devaki's seventh fetus from her womb to that of Rohini. She also placed Yashoda under a spell of deep sleep so that Vasudeva could bring the baby Krishna to her for protection from

Kamsa. At the same time, the bewildering potency of Mahamaya kept Kamsa and his henchmen under the spell of ignorance, unable to find or recognize Krishna for who He was.

In the Gita (7.25), Krishna says that He is not visible to everyone because He is hidden by His Yogamaya potency (*nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yogamāyā-samāvṛtaḥ*). Baladeva Vidyabhushan explains the usage of the word *yogamāyā* here as in fact meaning the external energy. The word *yoga* in this case refers to the yogic power of bewildering the non-devotees. The Supreme Lord is always visible to His devotees whose eyes are smeared with the unguent of love, while remaining hidden to those who have no interest in Him. Krishna is brilliant like the sun; there is not a single thing or person that has the power to conceal Him. The sun is more than a million times larger than the earth, so how can a tiny cloud cover the sun? It is our perception of the sun that is disrupted by the presence of the cloud, but we say that the cloud has covered it. Similarly, it is our vision of Krishna that is affected by the cloud of His illusory potency and keeps us unable to see or serve Him. For this reason, the Supreme Lord Himself, the object of everyone's service, appears as the guru, the exemplary servant—*guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā karena bhakti gaṇe*.

The spiritual master is the embodiment of the Supreme Lord's compassionate energy. By his own exemplary character, the spiritual master establishes the appropriate devotional behavior in others. The same was said of Mahāprabhu:

*āpani ācari dharma jīvere śikhāya
āpane nā kaile dharma śikhāno nā jāya*

"The Lord practiced the religion of devotion and taught it to others, for unless one practices religious principles oneself, he cannot instill them in others."

By taking shelter of the spiritual master, accepting his directions and worshiping Lord Krishna, through

his blessings one becomes free from the coverings of Maya and capable of receiving the blessings of Krishna Himself.

*tāte kṛṣṇa bhaje kare gurura sevana
māyā-jāla chūṭe pāya kṛṣṇera caraṇa*

"Upon receiving direction from the spiritual master [the disciple worships Krishna and serves his spiritual master. As a result, he escapes the power of Maya and attains Krishna's lotus feet.]"

The conditioned soul is forgetful of Krishna. Out of compassion for the conditioned souls, the Lord reveals Himself in scriptures like the Vedas and Puranas. He furthermore appears as the great devotee, spiritual master or *siksha guru* in order to explain the meaning of the scriptures. The Lord furthermore manifests as the interior guru or *caitya-guru* by which He gives the aspiring devotee the intelligence to understand the meaning of the scriptures.

It is thus stated in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.23):

*yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanāḥ*

"The inner meaning of the Upanishadic teachings are revealed to the great soul who has great devotion for the Lord, and in equal measure for the spiritual master."

Whatever spiritual practice we engage in must have the spiritual master at its center. Narottama Das Thakur sang the following:

*ki rūpe pāiba sevā mui durācāra
śrī-guru-vaiṣṇave rati nā hala āmāra*

"How will an evil person like myself ever attain service to the Divine Couple? I have never felt the slightest attachment for my spiritual master or the Vaishnavas." (*Prārthanā*)



śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma kevala bhakati-sadma
vandoṃ mui sābadhāna mate
jānhāra prasāde bhāi e bhava tariyā jāi
kṛṣṇa-prāpti haya jāhān haite

“I worship the spiritual master’s lotus feet, the abode of exclusive devotion, with great care and attention. O brother, by his mercy one can cross over this conditioned existence and attain the lotus feet of Sri Krishna.”

guru-mukha-padma-vākya cittete kariyā aikya
āra nā kariha mane āśā
śrī guru caraṇe rati, ei se uttama gati
je prasāde pūre sarva āśā

“Fix your mind on the words emanating from the lotus mouth of the spiritual master. Place your hopes in nothing else. Attachment for the lotus feet of Sri Guru is the ultimate goal, for by his mercy all of one’s aspirations are realized.”

caṅṣu-dāna dila jei janme janme prabhu sei
divya-jñāna hṛde prakāśita
prema bhakti jānhā haite avidyā-vināśa jāte
vede gāya jānhāra carita

“The one who gave me eyes to see is my master, birth after birth. By his grace, the light of divine knowledge illuminates my heart. From him comes ecstatic love for Krishna; from him, ignorance is destroyed and so the scriptures glorify his deeds.”

śrī-guru-karuṇā-sindhu adhama-janāra bandhu
lokanātha lokera jīvana
hā hā prabho kara dayā deha more pada-chāyā
ebe jaśa ghusuk tribhuvana

“The spiritual master is the ocean of compassion, the friend of the lowly. He is the lord and life of the worlds. O Master! Be merciful and give me shelter in the shade of your lotus feet. May your glories be sung throughout the universe.”

(Narottama Das, *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*)

Visvanath Chakravarti has also written :

yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto’pi

“By the spiritual master’s mercy, one receives the blessings of the Lord. Without his mercy, one has no hope of perfection.” (*Gurvaṣṭaka*, 8)

Thakur Bhaktivinoda is the best of the followers of Svarupa Damodar and Rupa Goswami. He recognized that my spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, had taken birth in the land of Purushottam, Jagannath Puri, where the Supreme Lord Himself had come to relish the taste of love in separation, in order to fulfill His divine will. He thus recognized his appearance to be the manifestation of the blessings of Jagannath Deva’s personal energy, Bimala Devi, who was acting to enrich the Lord’s own pastimes and so named him Bimala Prasad. It is impossible for anyone to preach the divine abode, name, form, activities and glories of the Supreme Lord without the direct blessings of His internal potency, Yogamaya—*kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*. In his later life, Srila Prabhupada took on other names (Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati and Varshabhavanavi-dayita Das) that were reflected in his virtues and activities.



Tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa¹ is an ancient institution amongst Vaishnavas, but it had no currency in Bengal at the time of Srila Prabhupada’s appearance. It is mentioned in many scriptures, including *Manu-saṁhitā* (12.10-11), *Hārīta-saṁhitā* (6.23), *Padma-purāṇa*, *Skanda-purāṇa*, *Jābāla Upaniṣad* and *Muktikā Upaniṣad*.

In the eleventh canto of the Bhagavatam, the activities of a monk with a triple staff (*tridaṇḍa*) from Avantipur are described extensively. The famous commentator on the Bhagavatam, Sridhar Swami, has mentioned *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa* twice in his *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* (at 10.86.3 and 11.18.28), showing particular respect for the institution by saying *pūjyatamaṁ tridaṇḍi-veṣam*—“the office of the triple-staffed monk is

most venerable." Amongst the followers of Ramanujacharya, the institution of tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa is still maintained to this day. Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu followed the local customs of the time by accepting the sannyas of the Mayavadis, known as eka-daṇḍi-sannyāsa because of the single staff that these monks carry. Despite this external act, however, the Lord showed that He internally considered himself to be a monk of the tridaṇḍi school.

prabhu kahe sādhu ei bhikṣuka-vacana
mukunda-sevana-vrata kaila nirdhāraṇa
parātmā-niṣṭhā mātṛa veṣa dhāraṇa
mukunda-sevāya haya saṁsāra tāraṇa
sei veṣa kaila ebe vṛndāvana giyā
kṛṣṇa niṣevāṇa kari nibhṛte basiyā

The Lord said, "I approve of the words of this monk from Avanti (SB 11.25.37), for he has indicated that sannyas is a commitment to the service of Mukunda, who alone grants liberation. The meaning of renunciation is simply to show that by commitment to the service of the Supreme Soul, Lord Mukunda, one crosses over the material ocean. Now that I have taken the dress of a monk, I shall go to Vrindavan where I can sit alone somewhere and engage in Lord Krishna's service." (Chaitanya Charitamrita, 2.3.7-9)

There is a Sanskrit saying that one does not become a true renunciate by simply carrying a bamboo staff (*veṇubhir na bhaved yatih*): one has to exercise control over the body, mind and words, engaging all these faculties in the service of the Lord. This is the meaning of the triple staff. This is why Nityananda Prabhu broke Mahāprabhu's staff into three pieces in order to demonstrate that His sannyas meant such a threefold commitment to Krishna's service. The meaning of the monastic order is a commitment to attaining the Supreme Soul; the only duty of the renunciate is to serve Lord Mukunda. A monk who does not take the vow of service is simply engaged in fraud and self-deception. Srila Prabhupada set the example of engaging in the Lord's service for each and every one of the twenty-four hours in a day. By so doing, he gave a living example of what is meant

by tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa.

As a small boy, Srila Prabhupada did not show the typical childish enthusiasm for playing and sports. He considered it all to be a waste of time. His taste for worshipping the Lord and chanting His name was entirely natural. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur gave Prabhupada his blessings to go and live in Mayapur in a place called *Baraja-pota*. Srila Prabhupada renamed the place *Vraja-pattana* and later established Chaitanya Math there. He lived there following a strict celibate lifestyle, exemplifying the dutiful behavior of a sadhaka by taking the vows of Chaturmasya and chanting one billion Holy Names. During this time, he also wrote commentaries on Chaitanya Charitamrita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Srila Rupa Goswami's *Upadeśāmṛta* and Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, as well as his book describing the relative positions of the Vaishnava and the brahmin. This work made him the object of Mahāprabhu and Bhaktivinoda Thakur's undying affection. Nevertheless, Srila Prabhupada said that his main mission in life was to preach the books and message of Bhaktivinoda Thakur. He considered Bhaktivinoda to be the manifest representative of Srimati Radharani. He had a saying, *bābā bādhā rādhā*, which means "thinking of him as a father is an obstacle to attaining Radharani." Throughout his career, Srila Prabhupada nearly always named the deities he installed in his temples *vinoda*, such as *Vinodānanda*, *Vinoda-prāṇa*, etc. The Thakur also showed his particular affection for Srila Prabhupada when he wrote:

sarasvatī kṛṣṇa-priyā kṛṣṇa-bhakti tāra hiyā
vinodera sei se vaibhava

"Saraswati is dear to Krishna; his heart is filled with devotion for Krishna. He is the manifestation of Bhaktivinoda's opulence."

Srila Prabhupada established temples and *mathas* throughout India as centers for preaching the pure devotional service taught by Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Nevertheless, he often said that he hadn't taken birth to become a bricklayer or carpenter. The goal was not to simply build temples and install deities in



order to make a living—eating, sleeping and pleasing one's own senses. The residents of the *mathas* must engage in the pure devotional lifestyle and try to spread the teachings in order to please the Lord, the guru and the Vaishnavas. Mahaprabhu told us to make our lives successful and to do good for others. No one can do good for others without leading an exemplary life himself. If the temples serve as centers for people who are leading this exemplary lifestyle and preaching Mahaprabhu's message and initiating others, then the whole world will benefit immensely.

Prabhupada made every effort to see that preaching went on in as much of India as possible. To this end he had books and magazines published in various different languages. To make a business of selling books is not helpful for one's spiritual life. It is the same as making a business out of giving initiation or selling mantras and the Holy Name. Prabhupada especially detested this kind of behavior for the scriptures condemn teaching the scriptures in order to make money. He used every means possible, whether books, slide shows, or dioramas, to interest people in the devotional message.

Though the most merciful Srila Prabhupada was born in the holy land of Bharata, he sought to establish pure devotional service and spread it throughout the world. During his own lifetime, he sent disciples to Europe on two different occasions, despite knowing that these countries are completely lacking in any strict principles of behavior or *sadācāra*, in the hope that they would be able to raise the victory flag of the Holy Name. From that time Mahaprabhu's name began to be heard in the West and finally, after Srila Prabhupada's departure, another most worthy disciple took up the mission and the entire western world was filled with the sounds of the Holy Name and the pure doctrines taught by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. All of Prabhupada's disciples are overjoyed to see learned people from all over the world inquiring about the truth of spiritual life in this way.

On March 24, 1980, the cornerstone for a new tem-

ple was laid in the house in Jagannath Puri where Srila Prabhupada was born. While the foundations were being dug, the devotees were overjoyed at seeing the pure earth with the fragrance of sandalwood incense. Just as Prabhupada was self-manifest, his birthplace is similarly so. Though many obstacles had to be overcome in order to make this temple a possibility, Prabhupada's dear disciple Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaja, out of his compassion for the devotees, agreed to accept the service and undertook the efforts to restore the holy site.

Now Sriman Mahaprabhu and Jagannath Deva, Himself in another form, have manifested a beautiful skyscraping temple over the site of Their dear devotee's appearance. Through their blessings and the inspiration given by Srila Prabhupada himself, a powerful desire to do this work manifested in the heart of Prabhupada's intimate associate, Srila Madhava Goswami Maharaja. He had to overcome numerous difficulties to achieve this work, but now deities have been consecrated and their service is being carried out in this temple. He had a two-story building constructed to house the devotees before he himself went to join his spiritual master in the eternal abode. His disciples sought to fulfill his desires and the Supreme Lord also arranged for the beautiful temple to be built where He and His manifest representative, Srila Prabhupada, could be worshiped. This took place on February 5, 1982, on the holy advent anniversary of Srila Prabhupada.

All glories to Lord Jagannath, the caretaker of His devotees!

All glories to the Lord of the Gambhira, who has taken the mood and bodily hue of the daughter of Vrishabhanu!

All glories to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Lord of Svarupa, Rupa, Raghunath and Varshabhanavi-dayita Das!
All glories to the divine abode of Purushottam Dham!
All glories to the devotees of the Dham!

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and all his disciples!
All glories to his divine birth, his divine works and his divine birthplace!

Prathupada's Divine Appearance

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¹ See *Gauḍiya-kanṭha-hāra*, 15.24-43, to find all the references mentioned here.



My Most Worshipable Srila Prabhupada

Sy utkale puruṣottamāt. This prophecy by Vyāsadeva recorded in the *Padma-purāṇa* indicates that the eternal, divine message was to be broadcast out of the land of Utkala, or Orissa, by which is specifically meant the city of Jagannath Puri, and from there spread throughout the world. To bring this prophecy to fruition, Sri Krishna's eternal associate and external manifestation—His *prakāśa-vigraha*, my most worshipable spiritual master, Jagad-guru Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, appeared in the midst of an ecstatic kirtan at 3:30 in the afternoon on Friday, February 6, 1871. His place of birth was Narayan Chata, the home of Lord Krishna's eternal associate Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, on the Grand Road not far from the main Jagannath temple. After a life dedicated to preaching the religion of love taught and practiced by Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, he ended his sojourn in this world on Thursday, January 1, 1937 at 5:30 in the morning. With his mind fixed on the lotus feet of Sri Sri Rādhā-Govinda, he entered the daily cycle of Their eternal pastimes just as They were awakening in each other's arms.¹

All of the unique features of Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's pastimes were fully revealed in Puri Dham. This is why the incarnation of Gaurāṅga's mercy, Srila Prabhupada, decided to begin his worldly pastimes in that holy place. Puri remained very dear to Srila Prabhupada's heart throughout his life. His last visit to Puri took place not long before his disappearance. In fact, he left Sri Puruṣottam Math on the ocean beach in Puri on the morning of December 7, 1936—just twenty-four days prior to his disappearance.

From Jagannath Puri, Srila Prabhupada went to the

Calcutta Bagh Bazaar Math. There, on December 23, in front of an audience of devotees, Prabhupada gave some important instructions to his initiated disciples about how to maintain their spiritual lives after his departure. On the very morning that he disappeared from this world, he ordered some of them to sing several bhajans, including Narottama Das's *Śrī-Rūpa-Manjarī-pada* and Bhaktivinoda Thakur's translation of the second verse of *Śikṣāṣṭaka*: *tuhuṁ dayā-sāgara tārāyite prāṇī, nāma aneka tuwā sikhāoāli āni* ("You are the ocean of mercy, and so You came to reveal Your numerous holy names to deliver the living beings," from *Gītāvalī*).

On hearing these songs, Srila Prabhupada commented, "Thakur Narottama brought Rupa and Raghunath's message to Bengal. It is therefore best for us to follow his teachings." With these words, he reiterated the instructions he had given his disciples on December 23, underlining their importance.

Although Srila Prabhupada showed special mercy to certain of his disciples on that occasion by mentioning their names, in fact his blessings extended to every single one of them without exception, wherever they happened to be at that time. He said, "All of you should know that I give you my blessings, whether you are present here today or far away. Just remember that our only religious duty is to preach the message of the Bhagavata and service to the Lord."

In the Chaitanya Charitamrita, it is written that the most important instructions are the last ones—*avaśeṣa ājñā balavān* (CC 2.22.59). In keeping with this directive, we should repeatedly examine Srila Prabhupada's final instructions and make them the guiding principles of our lives, for they contain the



essence of his teachings:

"All of you please preach the message of Rupa and Raghunath with great enthusiasm. The ultimate object of our desires is to become particles of dust at the lotus feet of the followers of Rupa Goswami.

"Our true being and identity is to be the dust at the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Prabhu, life after life. The channel that flows from Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur can never be obstructed. Remember this and vow to double your efforts to fulfill Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's desires. Amongst you are many capable and worthy individuals. We seek nothing for ourselves; our only motto is:

*ādadānas tṛṇaṁ dantair
idaṁ yāce punaḥ punaḥ
śrīmad rūpa-padāmbhoja-
dhūliḥ syāṁ janma-janmani*

"Taking grass between my teeth, I pray repeatedly that I may become a speck of dust at Sri Rupa Goswami's lotus feet, birth after birth."
(Raghunath Das Goswami, *Muktā-carita*.)

"May the current of ideas propagated by Sri Rupa and his followers be distributed throughout the world. Remain exclusively faithful to the followers of Rupa Goswami and preach Rupa and Raghunath's teachings fearlessly and enthusiastically.

"All of you, remain united in submission to the Deity, seeking to satisfy the transcendental senses of the one, non-dual Supreme Consciousness.

"Any arrangements we make in this world last for mere moments. Seeking the ultimate goal of life is an unavoidable necessity for us all. Work together toward a single purpose and win the eligibility to serve the original reservoir of devotion to Krishna.

"Make your way through this impermanent, transitory life in whatever way you can, keeping the goal of worshiping the Lord foremost in your minds.

Don't abandon this goal, even in the face of hundreds of dangers, insults, or persecutions. Don't lose your spirit if you see that the majority of people cannot accept the principle of selfless service to the Supreme Lord. Never abandon your bhajan, hearing and chanting Krishna-kathā—the sum and substance of your devotional life. Please always chant the name of the Lord, being humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree.

"May we never under any circumstances become indifferent to the seven-tongued sacrificial flame of the Holy Name. If our attraction to it remains ever increasing, we will achieve all perfection.²

"We can only begin to comprehend the exquisite taste of service to Krishna's lotus feet after transcending these worldly attractions and repulsions and being attracted by His divine name. Our only obligation is to go beyond duality and to enter that realm of eternal fulfillment."

Sri Purushottam is the site where Mahaprabhu relished the ecstasies of separation from Krishna. The mood of separation strengthens the experience of union. Overcome by the mood of Radharani in Her separation from Krishna after He had departed for Mathura, Mahaprabhu saw the blue water of the ocean as that of the Yamuna. When He saw the sand dunes on the beach (*cāṭaka-parvata*), He took them to be Giriraja Govardhana, while the gardens and orchards seemed to Him to be the forest of Vrindavan. In this mood of deep separation, the Lord cried out,

*kāhāṇ mora prāṇa-nātha murali-vadana
kāhāṇ karoṇ kāhāṇ pāṇ vrajendra-nandana
kāhāre kahiba kebā jāne mora duḥkha
vrajendra-nandana binu phāṭe mora buka*

"Where is the Lord of my life, Krishna, the flute player? What can I do to find him? Where is the son of Maharaja Nanda? To whom can I talk of my distress? Who will understand me? Without the son of



Nanda Maharaja, my heart is splitting in two.”
(CC 2.2.15-16)

As Mahaprabhu spoke these words, His breast became soaked with tears. For the twelve years that He lived in the Gambhira in Puri, the Lord continuously underwent ecstatic transformations due to the intensity of His emotion. He was constantly having visions of the Lord and sometimes would appear confused or speak as though delirious. Krishna Das Kaviraja Goswami records Mahaprabhu's lamentation in the following words:

*vaṁśī-gānāmṛta-dhāma, lāvaṇyāmṛta-janma-sthāna,
je nā dekhe se cāṇḍa vadana
se nayane kibā kāja, paṛuk tāra muṇḍe bāja,
se nayana rahe ki kārāṇa*

“Of what use are the eyes of one who never looks upon the moon-like face of Sri Krishna, the source of the nectarean flute song and the birthplace of all beauty? Let a lightning bolt fall on the head of such a person, for his eyes have no purpose whatsoever.”

*sakhī he śuna mora hata vidhi-bala
mora vapu-citta-mana, sakala indriya-gaṇa,
kṛṣṇa binu sakala viphalā*

“O listen to Me, My sakhi! I have lost all good fortune. My body, heart and mind, as well as My senses, are all pointless without Krishna.”

*kṛṣṇera madhura vāṇī, amṛtera taraṅgiṇī,
tāra praveśa nāhi je śravaṇe
kāṇā-kāṇi-chidra sama, jāniha se śravaṇa,
tāra janma haila akārāṇe*

“The ears of one who has never heard Krishna's sweet song, which is like a river of the nectar of immortality, are no better than the holes in a punctured cowry shell. Such an ear was brought into being without any reason.”

*kṛṣṇera adharāmṛta, kṛṣṇa-guṇa-carita,
sudhā-sāra-svāda-vinindana*

*tāra svāda ye nā jāne, janmiyā nā maila kene,
se rasanā bheka jihvā sama*

“The flavor of the nectar from Krishna's lips, His transcendental virtues and pastimes, surpasses that of the essence of ambrosia. Someone who has not tasted this nectar may as well have died, for his tongue is like that of a frog.”

*mṛga-mada nilotpala, milane je parimala,
jei hare tāra garva-māna
hena kṛṣṇa-aṅga-gandha, jāra nāhi se sambandha,
sei nāsā bhastrāra samāna*

“The nose of one who has not smelled the fragrance of Krishna's body, which mocks the aroma of musk combined with that of a bluish lotus flower, is no better than a blacksmith's bellows.”

*kṛṣṇa-kara-pada-tala, koṭi-candra-suśītala,
tāra sparśa jena sparśa-maṇi
tāra sparśa nāhi jāra, se jāuk chāra-khāra,
sei vapu lauha-sama jāni*

“The palms of Krishna's hands and the soles of His feet are so cool and pleasant that they can be compared only to the light of millions of moons. They transform everything they touch. One who has never experienced that touch is ruined and his body is like a soulless lump of iron.” (CC 2.2.30-35)

Whenever our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada discussed these pastimes, he would be overcome with emotion and tears would flow from his eyes, and bathe his chest. It was precisely in order to relish these pastimes more deeply that Srila Prabhupada established the Purushottam Math at Chattak Parvat in Puri. Prior to this, of course, he regularly visited Puri, staying at Satasana Math, at Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's bhajan kutir, Nilakuṭhi, and other places. In all these places, he set an example of real bhajan.

The secret truth of Mahaprabhu's form and incarnation



tion is found in the Divine Couple's embrace in the early morning of the daily cycle of their eternal pastimes. Some advanced and knowledgeable rasika (*aprākṛta rasajña*) devotees explain the meaning of Srila Prabhupada's entrance into the eternal pastime in the early morning as his rejoining the Divine Couple to serve Them while They are locked in such an embrace. We are also aware that Srila Prabhupada identified himself as Sri Varshabhanavi-dayita Das, which means the "servant of Radharani's beloved."

One of Srila Prabhupada's favorite books was Raghunath Das Goswami's *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*, all 104 verses of which he cherished and learned by heart. He considered any blessing given by Krishna without the mercy of Radharani to be Krishna's deception. He never considered Krishna alone and unaccompanied by Radha to be of great significance. He would quote one of the last verses of *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* to illustrate this point:

*āśā-bharair amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit
kālo mayātigamitaḥ kila sāmpratam hi
tvam cet kṛpām mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kim me
prāñair vrajena ca varoru bakāriṇāpi*

"O Radha of beautiful thighs! In reciting this poem I have passed a little time revealing my ambrosia-filled hopes. If you are not merciful to me now, then of what use to me is my life, my residence in Vraja, or even the company of Krishna, the enemy of Baka, himself?" (VK 104)

Srila Prabhupada experienced the separation felt by Radharani from Sri Krishna's departure in the identity of Nayanamani Manjari, the dearest companion of Rupa Manjari herself. Whenever he described the last twelve years of Mahaprabhu's pastimes at the Gambhira, during which He experienced ecstatic feelings (*mahabhava*) of separation in the mood of Radharani, Prabhupada would completely lose himself in ecstasy and forget the external world. When his trance broke, he would repeat Krishna Das Kaviraja Goswami's words from the Chaitanya Charitamrita, his voice fluttering with tears:

*hā hā kṛṣṇa prāṇa-dhana, hā hā padma-locana,
hā hā divya sad-guṇa-sāgara!
hā hā śyāma-sundara, hā hā pītāmbara-dhara,
hā hā rāsa-vilāsa nāgara
kāhāṇ gele tomā pāi, tumi kaha tāhāṇ jāi*

"Alas! Where is Krishna, the treasure of my life? Where is the lotus-eyed one? Alas! Where is the divine ocean of all transcendental qualities? Alas! Where is the beautiful, blackish youth dressed in yellow garments? Alas! Where is the hero of the Rasa dance? Where can I go to find Him? Tell me and I will go there." (CC 3.17.60-61)

One day in the Gambhira, Mahaprabhu put His arms around Ramananda Raya and Svarupa Damodar's shoulders and explained that the only way to attain the mood of love found in Vraja was through the chanting of the Holy Name. In the Age of Kali, the person who chants the Holy Name shows himself to be the most intelligent and capable of attaining Krishna's lotus feet.

Offenseless chanting of the mere reflection of the Holy Name results in the destruction of all one's anarthas, while chanting of the pure Name results in the attainment of love for Krishna and His lotus feet. Of all these Names, the most potent are those that the Divine Couple Radha and Krishna Themselves chant when separated from each other. Srila Prabhupada told his disciples that chanting these Names in the mood of separation was the topmost form of worship.

Srila Sanatan Goswami also taught that chanting the Holy Name is the devotional practice with the greatest capacity to produce ecstatic love for Krishna, having the power to enchant Krishna like a magic spell. Srila Prabhupada set the standard of unrelenting enthusiasm for chanting these Holy Names and taught his disciples the importance of following his example.

When Srila Prabhupada was relishing the mood of separation from the Lord, his natural feelings of



ecstatic love would be observable to everyone. He particularly relished the internal significance of Lord Gaurasundara's Rathayatra pastime, wherein Mahaprabhu, in the mood of Radharani, took Puri to be Kurukshetra and wished to carry Lord Jagannath off to Sundaracala, which He saw as Vraja. The strong feelings and deep connection that Srila Prabhupada had for this lila were particularly evident when he established an annual Rathayatra festival at the Kurukshetra Math so that he could relish the same mood there.

Our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada was unswervingly devoted to the chanting of the Holy Name from his childhood. While Bhaktivinoda Thakur was a deputy magistrate in Serampore, Srila Prabhupada was only a seventh-grade student. When he recognized Prabhupada's enthusiasm for the worship of the Holy Name, the Thakur gave him a gift of a japa mala made of tulasi beads which he had brought back from a trip to Jagannath Puri. Along with the japa beads, the Thakur also initiated him in the chanting of Harinam and the Nrisimha mantra.

In 1881, when Bhaktivinoda Thakur started construction on Bhakti Bhavan, his Calcutta home in the Ram Bagan neighborhood, a small deity of Kurma was found during the digging of its foundations. Though Srila Prabhupada was only eight or nine years old at the time, when his father saw his eagerness to worship the deity, he gave him the Kurma mantra and taught him the related procedures. From that time on, Prabhupada regularly engaged in the service of the deity and also began wearing tilak and following other aspects of Vaishnava behavior. I myself have had the good fortune of seeing this Kurma Salagram, which is still present at the Bhakti Bhavan building in Calcutta.

Srila Prabhupada began to preach Mahaprabhu's message in 1905 when he came to live in Sri Mayapur. During this time, he followed in the footsteps of the Namacharya, Srila Hari Das Thakur, and began chanting three lakhs of Holy Names every day, taking up a vow to chant a billion (*śata-koṭi*) in all. At the same

time, he took up severe ascetic practices. In 1909, he had a cottage built on the site of Chandrasekhara's house where he continued his intense bhajan. By its side, he also had a tank excavated. He saw this pond to be a direct manifestation of Radha Kund and so gave it that name.

On March 7, 1918, on the occasion of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's appearance day, Srila Prabhupada took tridandi-sannyāsa in Sri Mayapur. On that same day, he consecrated the deities of Guru-Gauranga and Radha-Govinda at the house of Chandrasekhara Acharya and established the Sri Chaitanya Math. On March 2, 1923, work began on the construction of the temple there. In the main temple room, deities of Guru-Gauranga and Gandharvika-Giridhari were installed, while in the four corners the worship of the founders of the four Vaishnava schools or *sampradāyas* (coming down from Lakshmi, Brahma, Rudra, and the four Kumaras) and their acharyas (Ramanuja, Madhva, Vishnuswami, and Nimbarka) was established.

On March 18, the cornerstone for the proposed temple at the birthplace of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was laid, and another for a smaller temple at Murari Gupta's house. Three months later, at 10 A.M. on June 13, the four-armed form of Vishnu known as Adhokshaja, formerly worshiped by Jagannath Misra, was found in the ground while digging the foundations for the new Yoga Pith temple. This *mūrti* is still worshiped there. On Dol Purnima, March 20, 1935, the Maharaja of the independent state of Tripura, Sir Bir Vikram Kishor Devavarma Manikya Bahadur, came to Mayapur on Srila Prabhupada's invitation to officially open the temple doors.

Chaitanya Math's first branch opened in Calcutta in 1920 in a rented house at 1 Ultadingi Junction Road. The center was transferred to a newly built temple in Bagh Bazaar in October of 1930. Gradually Srila Prabhupada and his disciples spread Mahaprabhu's gospel of pure devotional service to many places throughout India and abroad. This preaching work is still going on today. Sometimes Prabhupada went him-



self; other times he sent his qualified disciples on preaching missions to distribute this message of Mahāprabhu to all and sundry. He also published daily, weekly, and monthly magazines and journals in various languages, as well as many of the books written by Mahāprabhu's dear associates, the Six Goswamis. Through the use of such means, which were revolutionary for the time, the movement expanded rapidly and widely.

Srila Prabhupada told his disciples, "May Bhaktivinoda Thakur's songs and transcendental literature, which contain the same deep purport as those of Narottama Das Thakur, be distributed in abundance throughout Bengal, Orissa and Assam. May intelligent people all over the world recognize the glories of *Jaiva-dharma* and *Chaitanya-śikṣāmṛta*. May they carry aloft the victory flag of non-sectarian religion and recognize that Sri Krishna Chaitanya, the Holy Name and the Srimad-Bhagavatam are one and the same. May this transcendental institution of the followers of Rupa Goswami be forever engaged in Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's service. The Gaudiya Math's supreme motto is found in Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭakam*: *param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*. The only thing we desire in our lives is the dust of the lotus feet of Rupa Goswami, who made the desires of Lord Chaitanya a reality on this earth."

The unique characteristic of Srila Prabhupada's preaching was that even though he often spoke about the highest realms of devotional perfection, he always took care that none of his disciples got ahead of themselves and skipped necessary intermediate steps in the stage of practice to engage in *anadhikāra-carcā* ("discussion of matters for which one is not qualified"). *Sādhana bhakti*, the practice of devotional service, is divided into two streams: *vaidhī bhakti* and *rāgānugā bhakti*. The word *rāga* means a spontaneous attachment to the object of love. Those for whom such a natural and spontaneous affection has not yet become a reality, but who worship the Lord according to the scriptural injunctions, are engaged in *vaidhī bhakti*. *Rāgātmikā bhakti* is the kind of devotion experienced exclusively by the res-

idents of Vrindavan: it is characterized by spontaneous and powerful passion. The devotional service that emulates this passionate devotion of Vraja is called *rāgānugā bhakti*.

*vidhi-mārga-rata jane svādhīnatā ratna dāne
rāga-mārga karān praveśa
rāga-vaśavartī haiyā pārakīya bhāvāśraye
labhe jīva kṛṣṇa-premāveśa*

"The Holy Name gives the jewel of independence to the person fixed in the regulative principles, placing him on the path of spontaneous devotion. That person, overcome by spontaneous attachment to the Lord, takes shelter of the *parakīyā* mood and goes on to become absorbed in love for Krishna."
(Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur)

If one attempts the cultivation of *rāga marga* (the path of spontaneous devotion) prior to gaining the proper qualifications for such practice and at the same time pays less attention to the chanting of the Holy Names, he is like the person who tries to pick a fruit without climbing the tree. He will only get the damaged fruit that has fallen to the ground. Prabhupada characterized those who engaged in such *anadhikāra-carcā* as Prakṛita Sahajīya and rebuked them for their entering into realms for which they were not qualified. Prabhupada wrote in his commentary on the Chaitanya Charitāmṛta: "Prakṛita Sahajīyas and other followers of corrupt paths have not in fact acquired a genuine taste for devotional service: they are called *ajāta-ruci*. Even so, they falsely think themselves qualified for *rāgānugā bhakti* and thus give up studying the theological literature and learning the genuine path set out by Rupa Goswami. Instead they give proof of their foolishness by engaging in illicit sexual activities and culturing a taste for mundane pleasures. Such people are most unfortunate and deprived for, by doing so, they assure their spiritual destruction."
(*Anubhāṣya*, Madhya 22.)

In *Bhakti-sandarbhā*, Sri Jiva Goswami outlines the process to spiritual realization:



prathamam nāmaṇ śravaṇam antaḥkaraṇa-suddhyartham apeksyam. śuddhe cāntaḥ-karaṇe rūpa-śravaṇena tad-udaya-yogyatā bhavati. samyag-udite ca rūpe guṇānām sphuraṇam sampadyate. sampanne ca guṇānām sphuraṇe parikara-vaiśiṣṭyena tad-vaiśiṣṭyam sampadyate. tatas teṣu nāma-rūpa-guṇa-parikareṣu samyak sphuriteṣu līlānām sphuraṇam suṣṭhu bhavati.

“First it is expected that one should hear the Lord’s names in order to purify the heart. Once the mind and intelligence have been purified in this way, one can hear about Krishna’s form, through which one’s qualification to visualize it is obtained. When the form of the Lord has been clearly visualized, one can experience His qualities. Once these have been clearly understood, one develops one’s own individual spiritual characteristics through the particular characteristics of the Lord’s associates. Thus, once the name, form, qualities and associates of the Lord have been clearly realized, a clear realization of Krishna’s activities will follow.”

(Krama-sandarbhā commentary to SB 7.5.18)

Krishna Das Kavirāja Goswami translates the last verse of the Rasa-līlā (*vikrīḍitam vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ*, SB 10.33.32) as follows:

*vraja-vadhū-saṅge kṛṣṇera rāsādi-vilāsa
jei jana kahe śune kariyā viśvāsa
hṛd-roga-kāma tānra tat-kāle haya kṣaya
tina-guṇa-kṣobha nahe mahā-dhīra haya*

“Anyone who listens to or describes the *rāsa-līlā* and other pastimes between the gopis and Krishna with faith is immediately freed from the disease of the heart—lust. Such a devotee is no longer influenced by the three qualities of material nature and so becomes wise.” (Chaitanya Charitamṛta 3.5.45-6)

Some unscrupulous characters take this verse and others like it to mean that they can give up the chanting of the Holy Names and spend their time in hearing and discussing the erotic pastimes of the Lord such as His Rasa-līlā, which is the most glorious of all the Lord’s

activities. They think that by hearing about Krishna’s Rasa-līlā, in a state of material contamination, they can become purified and thus qualified for *rāgānugā* practice. Śrīla Prabhupāda had the following to say about this in his commentary to the above verses:

“A person who hears or describes the Rasa-līlā and other such pastimes as found in the Bhagavatam, living them in his transcendental heart, then the material desires for sensual pleasure wane to nothingness. Because Krishna’s pastimes are transcendental, one who hears or speaks about them enters into that transcendental domain where the material qualities can no longer influence him. Even while in contact with matter, he is unaffected; his mind remains calm and steady. He is able to understand his own qualification to serve Krishna. No one should think, as do the Prakṛita Sahajiyas, that an ordinary living entity will overcome lust by hearing and chanting these pastimes if he is filled with contaminations like lust and greed, if he avoids accumulating the appropriate knowledge of the relationships between matter, the individual soul and the Supreme Lord, if he remains fixed in a subjective world centered on his own sensual pleasures, if his intelligence continues to be permeated with material conceptions, if he neglects all the purifying activities of devotional service in practice, and especially if he takes the spiritual love affairs of the Supreme Lord to have the same kinds of sensual motivations that he himself experiences. For this reason, Mahāprabhu emphasized the word ‘faith’ (*viśvāsa*) in order to forestall such sahajīya arguments. Thus Sukadeva has warned us in the Bhagavatam:

*naitat samācarej jātu
manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ
vinaśyaty acirān maudhyād
yathā’rudrābdhijam viṣam*

“One who is not as powerful as the Supreme Controller should certainly never imitate the activities of the transcendental Rasa-līlā of Krishna, not even within his mind. If out of ignorance one does so, he will be destroyed, just as if he were to imitate



Lord Shiva, who drank poison produced from the ocean.” (SB 10.33.30)

Srila Jiva Goswami also wrote the following significant commentary in *Bhakti-sandarbha* (338): “Thus it is self-evident that the Lord’s pastimes in association with Radha are supreme and, similarly, that worship of this form of the Lord is foremost. However, Krishna’s intimate pastimes with Radha should not be studied by those whose male organ undergoes transformation while doing so, nor by those who are in the moods of parenthood, friendship or servitude, for it goes against their spiritual disposition.”³

*anugrahāya bhaktānām
mānuṣaṁ deham āśritaḥ
bhajate tādṛśiḥ krīḍā
yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet*

“Krishna appears in His human form and performs pastimes such as the *rāsa-līlā* in order to show mercy to the devotees. Those qualified devotees who hear such pastimes become devoted to His service.” (10.33.36)

In the above verse, the word *bhajate* means “performs” and *tat-paro* means “devoted to His service.” But many are those who get the contrary result because they engage in practices for which they have no qualification. For this reason Srila Prabhupada sought to protect the fallen conditioned souls by instructing them to chant the Holy Names in the mood of separation. Krishna has placed all His potencies in His own names and therefore it is said that all perfections come from chanting them (*ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra*). There are sixty-four practices included in the process of *sādhana bhakti*, of which nine are considered to be the most effective in awakening love for Krishna and therefore attaining Him. Of these, the chanting of the Holy Names is supreme:

*bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava-vidhā bhakti
kṛṣṇa-prema kṛṣṇa dite dhare mahā-śakti*

*tāra madhye sarva-śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana
niraparādhe laile nāma pāya prema-dhana*

“Of the many ways of executing devotional service, there are nine that are considered to be foremost, for they possess a great capacity to deliver love for Krishna and thus Krishna himself. Of these nine processes of devotional service, the most important is the chanting of the Lord’s holy name, for if one chants without committing offenses he will obtain the treasure of love for the Lord.” (CC 3.4.70-1)

A devotee who reverently follows the practices and regulative principles of the *vidhi-bhakti* path, and particularly takes to regular chanting of the Holy Names, receives the mercy of the Name that gradually bestows upon him the qualifications to engage in *rāgānugā bhakti*. If one does not seek the mercy of the Holy Name first, but artificially tries to appropriate the right to engage in such practices, he is like a pumpkin that ripens too quickly and bursts—he inevitably falls down. For this reason, Srila Prabhupada did not artificially give *siddha-praṇālī* and instructions to remember the *aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā* to people who were not ready for it. As a result, some people call the devotees of the Gaudiya Math *jñānī-bhaktas*, but this is offensive to the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupada and will cause insurmountable obstacles to their spiritual advancement. Srila Prabhupada acted only out of compassion and for the benefit of the fallen souls. Because they do not realize the truth of Mahaprabhu’s statement that all perfections come from the Holy Name, the Prakṛita Sahajiyas make ignorant and offensive comments and this is ultimately why they are repeatedly seen engaging in various kinds of illicit sexual activity.

In conclusion, we offer our heartfelt prayers to the lotus feet of our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada: “O master! Please be merciful to us and gradually lead us from the *vidhi-mārga* to the *rāgānugā* path by giving us ever increasing enthusiasm for the worship of the Holy Names, in the way that you have instructed us. Then we will be able to very quickly win the right to enter into the most secret realms of the mystic service

of the Lord. We are the least of the servants of your servants; knowing this, Radha-Madanamohana, Govinda and Gopinath will be merciful to us and enrich our understanding of the *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana-tattvas*. Then they will give us entry into their loving service and make our lives completely perfect. We will never make a pretense of being advanced *rasi-ka* devotees in order to win profit, adoration and prestige because we know that such falsehood will only lead us inevitably down to hell. Therefore, the most intelligent thing to do is to follow the example of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and worship Krishna's holy name in the spirit of separation. Through the mercy of the Holy Name we will have the good fortune of attaining all perfection in spiritual life."

reveals the nature of divine loving service to the soul, by which she experiences the intrinsic delight of the ever-expanding ocean of devotional sentiment; (6) *prati-padam purnāmṛtāsvādanam*—intoxicated by the wine of divine love, the soul continuously drinks the endlessly captivating and ambrosial service to the Divine Couple in the five loving moods of service, friendship, parental love, and consort-hood; (7) *sarvātma-snapanam*—all dimensions of the spiritual being are freed from desires extraneous to loving devotional service, including the desire for liberation of any sort.

³ *parama-śreṣṭha-śrī-rādhā-saṁvalita-līlā-maya-tad-bhajanam tu paramatamam eveti svataḥsidhyati kintu rahasya-līlā tu paurusa-vikāravat-indriyair-pitr-putra-dāsa-bhāvaiś ca nopāsyā svīya-bhāva-virodhāt*

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¹ The Bengali year is given as 1280, Śaka year 1795, the tithi as Māghī Kṛṣṇa pañcamī for Saraswati Thakur's birth, and Kṛṣṇa caturthī of Pauṣa, Bengali year 1343, 4 Nārāyaṇa, 450 years after the birth of Sri Chaitanya (*Gaurābda*), as the day of his disappearance.

² The seven-tongued sacrificial fire of the Holy Name refers to the seven perfections attained through proper chanting. They are elaborately discussed in the commentaries on the first verse of *Śikṣāṣṭaka* by Srila Bhaktinoda Thakur (*Śrī Sanmodana-bhāṣyam*) and Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. In summary they are: (1) *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*: the mirror of the heart is cleansed of all impurities; (2) *bhava-mahādāvāgni-nirvāpanam*: one is liberated from the fire of conditioned existence; (3) *śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitaranam*—one receives the benediction of pure dedication to the lord, which is compared to the flowering of a pristine white lotus, (4) *vidyā-vādhū-jīvanam*—one is awakened in spiritual consciousness and is endowed with transcendental knowledge of his eternal identity; (5) *ānandāmbudhi-varadhanam*—the Holy Name progressively



A Few Glimpses of the Lotus Feet of Srila Prabhupada

Once, Srila Prabhupada was standing on the front porch of the Sri Chaitanya Math temple taking darshan of the deities of Sri Sri Guru-Gauranga-Gandharvika-Giridhari. The door to the altar is not very wide and Srila Prabhupada did not have his glasses on. Standing next to him was one of his dear disciples. The disciple thought perhaps Prabhupada could not view the deities very well through the narrow doorway. He said, "Prabhupada, this doorway is not very wide. It will be difficult for you to see the deities from here."

When he heard this, Prabhupada smiled and gave the following teaching for the benefit of us all: "We should not think of the Supreme Lord as an object of our mundane vision. We should rather consider how we might become worthy objects of His vision. Then He will both want to see us and reveal Himself to us."

*atah śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

"The holy name, form, qualities and pastimes of Sri Krishna are divine and transcendental. They cannot be experienced by material senses. The Lord manifests Himself spontaneously on the tongue of a devotee who is eager to serve Him." (BRS 1.2.109)

Just as a devotee waits to see the Lord with great patience and eagerness, sometimes the Lord also waits with great patience and eagerness to see His devotee. It is described in the Chaitanya Charitamrita how the deity of Gopal in Vrindavan was hidden as He waited for Sri Madhavendra Puri,

His beloved devotee.

*bahu-dina tomāra patha kari nirīkṣaṇa
kabe āsi mādharma āmā karibe sevana*

"I have been watching the road for many days, waiting for you. I have been wondering, 'When will Madhavendra Puri come here to serve Me?'" (CC 2.4.39)

The Supreme Lord, Who succumbs to His devotee's love, eagerly waits to see him in this way.

*bhaktera dravya prabhu kārī kārī khāya
abhaktera dravya prabhu ulaṭi nā cāya*

"The Lord will grab food from His devotee, but will not even glance at anything offered Him by a non-devotee." That is why eagerness to serve the Lord in loving devotion must be present.

*bhaktir evainam nayati
bhaktir evainam darśayati
bhakti-vaśaḥ puruṣaḥ
bhaktir eva bhūyāsi*

"Devotion attracts the Lord, devotion reveals Him; He is influenced by devotion. Nothing is more powerful than bhakti." (Māṭhara-śruti)

When our devotion has become filled with intense desire or *anurāga*, then we will have become worthy of being seen by Krishna. The following verse is found in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.38):

*premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti*



*yam śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

"I worship the primeval Lord Govinda, the beautiful black boy with innumerable inconceivable attributes. The pure devotees see Him in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love."

On another day, a few disciples were accompanying Srila Prabhupada as he walked from the Chaitanya Math to the Yoga Pith. Unfortunately, people from Mayapur village were in the habit of using the sides of the road to go to the toilet. One of Prabhupada's dear disciples covered his nose with his cloth and showed signs of discomfort at the odor. Prabhupada laughed and said, "It seems that you cannot smell the sweet fragrance of the Holy Dham; only the mundane stink of this material world is entering your nose. You should not think of the Dham as a mundane place; it is an extension of the Lord's own person."

He then quoted from Jiva Goswami's Sandarbhas:

*ekam eva tat parama-tattvaṁ svābhāvikācintya-śaktyā
sarvadaiva svarūpa-tad-rūpa-vaibhava-jīva-pradhāna-
rūpeṇa caturdhāvatīṣṭhate*

"The one Supreme Truth is always manifested in four different ways by His inseparable inconceivable potency: as *svarūpa*, His original form; as *tad-rūpa-vaibhava*, His expansions or spiritual energy; the *jīva* souls; and the *pradhāna* or material energy."

From February 3 to March 17, 1930, Srila Prabhupada put on an unprecedented Vaishnava exposition, the *Śrī-Dhāma-Māyāpura-Navadvīpa-pradarśinī*. Many dignitaries were invited for the occasion and the famous Bengali chemist, Sir Prafulla Chandra Raya, came to Mayapur expressly to open the *pradarśinī*. In order to house the exhibits, a large number of temporary structures were built of bamboo and corrugated tin. By the grace of Sri Gurudeva and Lord Gauranga, the skies remained clear throughout the festival period. On the last day, however, a violent storm tore off

the tin roofs and sent them flying into the air. One sheet of tin flew against the tower of the main temple building, chipping off the concrete plaster and the large metal rod from the spire over the shrine of Ramanujacharya. It then continued on its way, finally landing next to the tube well by the kirtan hall.¹

After the tempest had died down, Prabhupada and his disciples went to inspect the damage and saw that the spire had been broken. Srila Prabhupada said, "Ramanuja is the acharya of deity worship because of his dedication to that devotional practice. If his dome has been damaged, it is surely because there has been some defect in the service to the deities in the temple." It turned out that the pujari had indeed made some grave error in his service. He was removed from his position and the damage to the dome was repaired.

If anything was ever stolen from the temple or if Srila Prabhupada or one of the other residents of the ashram fell seriously ill, Prabhupada would warn everyone about offenses in worshiping the deities. He repeatedly put his disciples on guard against offenses to the Holy Name, to the Deity, and to the Holy Dham.

Srila Prabhupada gave Aprakrita Bhakti Saranga Prabhu the responsibility to preach the message of Lord Chaitanya in Europe and America. Prior to sending him off to London on October 23, 1936, he gave him instructions in the worship of the Gomati, Gandaki and Govardhana *śilās*. To bid him a glorious passage, a large public meeting was held in the Bagh Bazaar Gaudiya Math's kirtan hall (*Sārasvata-śravaṇa-sadana*). In his speech, Srila Prabhupada encouraged Bhakti Saranga Prabhu in his London preaching mission and gave him profuse blessings. As Mahaprabhu's eternal associate, he naturally looked for ways to benefit all of humanity by preaching Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings around the world. Out of his firm faith in this principle, he demonstrated an indomitable enthusiasm for practicing and preaching Mahaprabhu's message wherever he went. Srila Prabhupada had previously (from



March 1933 to 1936) sent his disciples Tridandi Swami Bhakti Pradip Tirtha and Bhakti Hriday Bon Maharaj to London and Germany with the goal of holding public meetings to preach Mahāprabhu's message. He kept in touch with them by airmail, regularly sending them articles and preaching advice. Through this effort, many highly educated and respectable people had the opportunity to hear about Mahāprabhu. With Prabhupada's approval, these two preachers established the London Gaudiya Mission Society and the London Gaudiya Math. Lord Zetland was made chairman of the Mission Society and he led weekly discussions of Srila Prabhupada's epistles on the special characteristics of Lord Chaitanya's message.

Prabhupada also sent missionaries to Rangoon in Burma (now Myanmar). In 1936, the Rangoon preaching center was opened and deities were installed there. Unfortunately, the political climate in Burma² then was such that people were unable to appreciate Mahāprabhu's religion of love and the center was closed not long afterward.

Srila Prabhupada either went himself with his entourage or sent his disciples to most of the pilgrimage sites and major cities throughout both northern and southern India establishing preaching centers, Deity worship, and spreading Lord Chaitanya's religion of love in all these places. During the time Prabhupada was present in this world, sixty-four *mathas* were established, a list of which was printed in the weekly *Gaudiya* magazine. Today, we see that his disciples have greatly expanded the number of temples and *mathas* throughout India and the rest of the world.

Srila Prabhupada also had the goal of establishing 108 or more shrines to Mahāprabhu's lotus feet in all the places that He had visited in the course of His travels throughout India. During Prabhupada's lifetime, eight such shrines were established at Mandara, Kanai Natashala, Jajpur, Kurmakshetra, Simhachala, Kavoor, Mangalagiri, and Chatrabhoga. Since then, other such shrines have been placed in

Maldah, Puri (Atharonala), and other places.

Srila Prabhupada used to participate personally in the circumambulation or *parikrama* of Vrindavan and Gaura Mandala. He also often visited the main holy places in Puri. He made the annual *parikrama* of Nabadwip Dham an institution, which his disciples have maintained out of faithfulness to his instruction. Srila Prabhupada used to say that the *Srī-Dhām-parikrama* gave everyone the opportunity to simultaneously engage in all five principal devotional acts (associating with devotees, chanting the Holy Name, hearing the Bhagavatam, living in the Holy Dham, and worshiping the Deity). For this reason, we continue to perform this service annually and with great care on the days preceding Mahāprabhu's appearance day on Dol Purnima.

To make an impression on the minds of the conditioned souls, Srila Prabhupada established a program of transcendental diorama exhibitions illustrating the main points of Lord Chaitanya's philosophy. The Kurukshetra Gaudiya Exhibition (*pradarśanī*) was opened on November 4, 1928, August 21, 1933, and June 19, 1936; the Sri Dham Mayapur-Nabadwip Exhibition on February 9, 1930; the Calcutta Gaudiya Math Spiritual Exhibition (*Pāramārthika Pradarśanī*) on November 5, 1930; the Calcutta Gaudiya Math Saintly Teachings Exhibition (*Sat-sikṣā Pradarśanī*) on September 6, 1931; and the Dhaka Saintly Teachings Exhibition on January 6, 1933; the Patna Spiritual Exhibition on November 14, 1933, the Kashi Spiritual Exhibition on December 24, 1933 and the Prayag Saintly Teachings Exhibition on January 7, 1936.

In the 82nd chapter of the Tenth Canto and in the Chaitanya Charitamrita, the gopis' visit to the Sāmantapañcaka lake in Kurukshetra is described. This took place after they had been suffering from Krishna's separation for many years and went there to meet Him when the occasion of a solar eclipse presented itself. Mahāprabhu relived the mood of the gopis on the occasion of this meeting whenever He saw Lord Jagannath in Puri. Overwhelmed by Srimati



Radharani's mood of separation, Mahaprabhu would express the desire to take the Lord back to Vraja with Him. As He pulled Lord Jagannath on the chariot from the Kurukshetra of Puri to the Vraja of Sundarachala He would sing,

*sei to parāṇa-nātha pāinu
jāhā lāgi madana-dahane jhuri mainu*

"I have finally found the Lord of my life for whom I have spent so long burning in the fires of love."
(CC 2.1.55)

This is the lila of Mahaprabhu at the Rathayatra. Srimati Radharani could not bear to see Krishna in the dress of a king, surrounded by the royal horses, elephants and courtiers. So She said,

*anyera hṛdaya man, mora mana vṛndāvan,
mane vane eka kari jāni
tāhān tomār pada-dvaya, karāha yadi udaya,
tabe tomār pūrṇa kṛpā māni*

"For others, the mind is at the heart of their being, but My mind is Vrindavan; I consider both My mind and Vrindavan to be one. Were you to place Your lotus feet there in My Vrindavan-mind, I would deem it the fullest expression of Your mercy." (CC 2.13.137)

*jagannātha dekhi prabhura se bhāva uṭhila
sei bhāvāviṣṭa hañā dhuwā gāoāila
avaśeṣe rādhā kṛṣṇe kare nivedana
sei tumi sei āmi sei nava saṅgama
tathāpi āmāra mana hare vṛndāvana
vṛndāvane udaya karāo āpana-carāṇa
ihān lokārāṇya hātī ghorā ratha dhvani
tāhān puṣpārāṇya bhṛṅga-pika-nāda śuni
ihān rāja-veśa saṅge saba kṣatriya-gaṇa
tāhān gopa-veśa saṅge murali-vādāna
vraje tomāra saṅge yei sukha-āsvādāna
sei sukha-samudrera ihān nāhi eka kaṇa
āmā lañā punaḥ līlā karaha vṛndāvane
tabe āmāra mano-vāñchā haya ta pūrāṇe*

When He saw Lord Jagannath, Mahaprabhu became

absorbed in the mood of Radharani and had the devotees sing these couplets. He spoke the following words: "You are the same Krishna, and I am the same Radharani. We are meeting again in the same way that We did when Our love was first beginning. Even so, My mind still yearns for Vrindavan. So please bring Your lotus feet back to Vrindavan once again. Here there is a great forest of people making a horrendous din with their elephants, horses, and chariots. In Vrindavan, however, there are forests of flowers, the sounds of humming bees and the cuckoos' song. Here at Kurukshetra You are dressed like a king and accompanied by great warriors, but in Vrindavan You dressed like an ordinary cowherd boy, accompanied only by Your beautiful flute. Here there is not even a drop of the ocean of transcendental happiness that I enjoyed with You in Vrindavan. I therefore request You to come to Vrindavan and once again enjoy pastimes with Me. If You do so, My heart's desire will be fulfilled." (CC 2.13.125-131)

When Gaudiya Vaishnavas see the Rathayatra in Puri they think just like Mahaprabhu: "I will take Krishna home with me to Vraja." (*kṛṣṇa lañā vraje jāi e-bhāva antare*, CC 2.1.156)

Overcome by Mahaprabhu's mood of love in separation, Srila Prabhupada established a *maṭha* in Kurukshetra called the Sri Vyasa Gaudiya Math where he instituted an annual Rathayatra festival and spiritual exhibition.

Madhavendra Puri called Krishna *Mathurānātha* or "Lord of Mathura." This name revealed how his heart was being torn apart by the mood of separation. In the same way, Srila Prabhupada, who considered himself to be the humble servant of the lover of Vrishabhanu's daughter, and would be overcome by feelings of separation whenever the subject matter of Radha and Krishna's meeting in Kurukshetra came up. In particular, when opening the Bhagavata exhibition in Kurukshetra, as he spoke about this lila, tears flowed from his eyes, and wet his breast and his voice choked with ecstasy. Whenever he took darshan of Lord Jagannath in Puri, he would

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relish the verse written by Rupa Goswami and quoted in Chaitanya Charitamrita:

*priyaḥ so'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-carī kurukṣetra-militaḥ
tathāhaṁ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukhaṁ
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-murali-pañcama-juse
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya sprhayati*

“O companion! This is the same beloved Krishna meeting Me here in Kurukshetra; and I am the same Radha, and both of Us are feeling the joy of union. Even so, My mind wishes for the forest by the banks of the Yamuna where the fifth note of His flute reverberated sweetly within My heart.” (*Padyāvalī*, 383)

When rejecting those things that oppose pure devotion, Prabhupada could be more uncompromising than a bolt of lightning. On the other hand, when accepting those things that are favorable to pure devotional service, his heart was softer than a rose. Tears would pour from his eyes whenever he spoke on Radharani's distress at Krishna's leaving for Mathura.

Srila Prabhupada had an incomparable attachment to Hari-kathā, ambrosial discussions about the Lord. Hours would go by, even so, he would become irritated when his disciples indicated that prasada had been served. He would say, “There is really a famine of Hari-kathā in the world!” Sometimes he was advised by doctors not to speak for the sake of his health. If someone asked him how he was, he would answer, “I am well, but they won't let me speak about Krishna. That is what is making me sick.”

Prabhu also loved kirtan, but he hated hearing kirtan that was sung by unqualified people, contained elements that went against the pure dogmas of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, or in which there was a corrupt understanding of the divine rasas (*rasābhāsa*). He wrote the following verse making it clear who was actually qualified to chant the Holy Names:

*prāṇa āche jāra, sei hetu pracāra
pratiṣṭhāśā hīna kṛṣṇa-gāthā saba*

*śrī-dayita-dāsa kīrtanete āśa
kara uccaiḥsvare harināma raba*

“O mind! This humble servant of Radha and Krishna places his hopes in kirtan and loudly sings the names of Lord Hari! Those who have spiritual life in abundance preach the Lord's message. Every word they speak is free from the taint of desire for personal prestige.” (*Vaiṣṇava ke?*)

Taking shelter of the Lord without any desire for personal aggrandizement is what gives the devotee life. A non-devotee who has not taken shelter of the Lord may speak about Krishna, but such topics are lifeless, as devoid of spirit as a cadaver, and are not worthy of being heard. Prabhupada could not tolerate discussion of topics that were outside of one's range of qualification (*anadhikāra-carcā*). Constant remembrance of Lord Krishna's lotus feet is the purifier of existence and results in devotion to the Lord. “One who chants without offenses attains love for Krishna” (*niraparādhe laile nāma upajaya prema-dhana*). Prabhupada was unable to tolerate those who made no effort to chant the Holy Name without offenses but made an external show of practicing devotional service while seeking profit, adoration and prestige.

*mādhavendra purī bhāva-ghare curi
nā karila kabhu sadāi jānaba*

“Always remember that Madhavendra Puri never stole from the treasure house of divine emotion.” (*Vaiṣṇava ke?*)

And Jagadananda Pandit says in *Prema-vivarta*:

*jadi bhajibe gorā sarala kara mana
kuṭi-nāṭi chāri bhaja gorāra caraṇa
gorāra āmi gorāra āmi balile nāhi cale
gorāra ācāra gorāra vicāra laile phala phale*

“If you wish to worship Gaura, then take on an honest attitude. Stop all nitpicking and simply worship His lotus feet. It is not enough to repeat over and



over, 'I belong to Gaura.' You will get the results of your worship if you act according to His standards and accept His doctrines."

In the words of the great souls, *vidhi-mārge vraja-bhāva pāite nāhi śakti*: "One cannot attain the mood of Vraja by mere practice of the external principles of devotion." The actual gift of spontaneous devotion is awarded only by the intense greed to receive it, coupled with the blessings of proximity to a *rāgaṭmika sad-guru* (a genuine preceptor whose divine loving relationship is established with the Lord) who is a resident of Vraja Dham. Pretentiously imitating the activities of realized souls is a disturbance to society, resulting in *anadhikāra-carcā*, "unqualified discussions." Premature attempts at spontaneous devotion are of no avail.

In the context of the verse quoted above, one may well ask what is the real method of attaining service of the mood of Vraja residents, or *rāgaṇugā bhakti*? Sriman Mahaprabhu revealed the answer to this question when He informed His confidential associates Svarupa Damodar and Ramananda Raya to deeply imbibe the following verses:

*nāma-saṅkīrtana kalau parama upāya
ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra*

"The supreme process of spiritual realization in the age of Kali is the chanting of the Holy Name. Through it you will attain all perfections."

The Holy Name is to be taken shelter of in complete faith and this will ensure all perfection to the chanter.

*iṣat vikaśi punaḥ dekhāya nija-rūpa-guṇa
citta hari laya kṛṣṇa pāśa
pūrṇa vikaśita haṇā vraje more jāya laṇā
dekhāya nija svarūpa vilāsa*

"When the Name is even slightly revealed, it shows me my own spiritual form and characteristics. It steals my mind and takes it to Krishna's side. When the Name is fully revealed, it takes me directly to Vraja,

where it shows me my personal role in the eternal pastimes." (*Krishna-nāma dhare kata bala? Śaraṇāgati*)

The Lord has two forms: the *vācya*, the Lord who is signified by His name, and the *vācaka*, the Lord's name. But of the two, the Lord's name, the *vācaka*, is more compassionate than the Lord Himself. The signifier bestows more blessings than the signified. In view of this, it is good advice to avoid inventing other means of spiritual advancement, which ultimately lead to deviation from the path. Of course, some fortunate devotional practitioners encounter a *sad-guru* who is qualified to show them how to progress on the *rāgaṇugā bhakti* path. For them, such restrictions do not apply.

*vikṛīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yah
bhaktim parām bhagavati pratilabhya kāmān
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

"The self-controlled and faithful person who hears or describes these pastimes of the Lord Vishnu with the wives of Vraja will attain the highest stage of devotion to the Lord and will very quickly be freed from the disease of the heart known as lust."

(SB 10.33.39)

The word *śraddhānvitaḥ* used in this verse from the Bhagavata specifically refers to the faith that leads to the attainment of spontaneous devotion. Sriman Mahaprabhu has stressed that the Holy Name is replete with all transcendental potency, being non-different from the Supreme Person Sri Krishna. The Holy Name is pure, eternal, replete with all spiritual mellows and comparable to a wish-fulfilling tree. The process of attaining pure spontaneous devotion is by exclusive surrender to the lotus feet of the personified Name, praying to Him with complete yearning and taking to the chanting with fixed resolve. As the aspirant ceases committing offenses, the Holy Name awards him with the association of an eternal associate of the Lord in Vraja, a devotee who is completely absorbed in spontaneous love for the Lord. The blessings of the Holy



Name are such that they make the impossible possible and put love of God within the grasp of even the most fallen aspirant.

In Srila Visvanath Chakravarti Thakura's commentary to the above verse from the *Rasa-lila*, it is written:

ata eva śraddhānvita itī sāstrāviśvāsinām nāmāparādhinaṁ premāpi nāṅgikarotīti bhāvaḥ... ayam śrī-rāsaḥ śrīr api nāpa yam.

*śāstra-buddhi-vivekādyair
api durgamam īksyate
gopīnām rasa-vartmedaṁ
tāsām anugatīr vinā*

"The word *śraddhānvitaḥ* indicates that ecstatic love for Krishna does not come to those who do not believe the scriptures or who persist in committing offenses against the Holy Name. Thus even Lakshmi cannot enter into this Rasa dance. Without exclusively following in the footsteps of the gopis, even those who believe in the scriptures and are very intelligent cannot enter onto this most difficult path of sacred rapture chalked out by the gopis."

For this reason, our most revered Srila Prabhupada never approved of open discussion by the unqualified of the divine rasa, which is beyond the attainment of even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and always gave priority to the chanting of the Holy Name. The following couplet by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur is enlightening in this regard:

*vidhi-mārga-rata jane svādhīnatā ratna dāne
rāga-mārga karān praveśa
rāga-vaśavartī haiyā pāraḥkiya bhāvāśraye
labhe jīva kṛṣṇa-premāveśa*

"To the person fixed in the regulative principles, the Holy Name gives the jewel of independence, placing him on the path of spontaneous devotion. That person, overcome by spontaneous attachment to the Lord, takes shelter of the *parakīyā* mood and goes on to become absorbed in love for Krishna."

In his *Anuvṛtti* commentary to the 7th verse of Sri Rupa Goswamipada's *Upadeśāmṛta*, Srila Prabhupada says: "The Holy Name and Krishna's pastimes, etc., are compared to sugar candy, while ignorance is compared to excess bile. As a jaundiced person is unable to relish the flavor of sugar candy, similarly the eternally conditioned materialistic living entity is unable to taste the nectarean bliss of the Holy Name or Krishna's pastimes due to the ignorance born of his reluctance to engage in devotional service. In taking to chanting the Holy Names sincerely and endeavoring with right efforts, that is, with faith (*śraddhānvita*), their sweetness becomes increasingly apparent and will eventually lead to the dissipation of the reluctance to engage in devotional service and the end of the disease of sense-gratification."

Further on, in his explanation of the 8th verse of *Upadeśāmṛta* where Sri Rupa gives "the essence of all instructions," Srila Prabhupada writes: "The aspirant whose particular relation with the Lord has not yet been awakened should tame his outgoing and restless mind with the determined chanting of the holy names, pastimes, form and qualities of the Lord. Side by side, he should also remember the attributes of the Lord. As the aspirant's attraction to a particular relation is awakened, he should go to live in Vraja and spend the rest of his life following a specific resident of the Lord's abode. This is the essence of all instruction."

The first step of the aspirant's devotional life is called *śravaṇa-daśā*: "the hearing stage." In this stage, the devotee engages in constant hearing of Krishna's names, form, qualities and pastimes, until he reaches the stage known as *varaṇa-daśā* (the stage of acceptance). In this stage, he starts to repeat or chant those things that he has previously heard.

When one chants constantly according to his own particular mood, he reaches the stage known as *smaraṇa-daśā*. *Smaraṇa* or remembering has five different stages: *smaraṇa* ("remembering"), *dhāraṇā* ("concentration"), *dhyāna* ("meditation"), *dhruvānusrīti* ("fixed and constant remembrance"), and *samādhi* ("trance"). The first of these, *smaraṇa*, is



characterized by multiple distractions; the second, *dhāraṇā*, is remembrance without being distracted; the third, *dhyāna*, means meditation on every aspect of the object; constant meditation is called *dhruvānusr̥ti*; and *saṁādhi* is meditation without interruptions of any kind.

When one has passed through the *smaraṇa-daśā* he arrives at *āpana-daśā*, the state of attainment. In this stage, the aspirant knows his own spiritual identity. This is called *svarūpa-siddhi*. The next stage is called *sampatti-daśā*, or the “treasure stage” in which he achieves *vastu-siddhi*, or the actual perfection of joining the Lord’s eternal pastimes in a spiritual body.

The Chaitanya Charitamrita states that the *vaidha-bhakta* gives up his desires for sense gratification and practices devotional service because he is ordained to do so by the scriptures. As such a devotee does so, his taste for devotion, or *ruci*, eventually awakens. Once this taste has been awakened, then he gives up the sense of obligation to the rules and regulations and simply worships Krishna’s lotus feet (*vidhi-dharma chāri bhaje kṛṣṇera caraṇa*).

*rāgātmikā bhakti mukhya vraja-vāsī jane
tāra anugata bhaktira rāgānugā name*

“The passionate devotion known as *rāgātmikā bhakti* is primarily found amongst the residents of Vrindavan. The devotional practice that follows their spirit is called *rāgānugā bhakti*.” (CC 2.22.144)

*iṣṭe svārasikī rāgaḥ
paramāviṣṭatā bhavet
tanmayī yā bhaved bhaktiḥ
sātra rāgātmikoditā*

“The intense and spontaneous absorption in the object of one’s adoration (*iṣṭa*) is called *rāga*. Devotion that is characterized by such *rāga* is called *rāgātmikā bhakti*.” (BRS 1.2.272)

*rāgamayī-bhaktira haya rāgātmikā nāma
tāhā śuni lubdha haya kona bhāgyavān*

*lobhe vraja-vāsīra bhāve kare anugati
śāstra-yukti nāhi māne rāgānugāra prakṛti
bāhya antara ihāra dui ta sādhana
bāhye sādha-dehe kare śravaṇa-kīrtana
mane nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvana
rātri-dine kare vraje kṛṣṇera sevana*

“Devotional service pervaded by *rāga* is called *rāgātmikā bhakti*, spontaneous loving service. One is most fortunate if he covets such an attitude after hearing about it. If one follows in the footsteps of the inhabitants of Vrindavan out of such transcendental covetousness, he does not care for the injunctions or reasoning of scripture. That is the nature of the path that seeks spontaneous love. *Rāgānugā bhakti* is practiced both externally and internally. In the external body, the devotee acts as any other practitioner of devotional service and engages in hearing and chanting. In his mind, however, he meditates on his spiritual body and serves Krishna there in Vrindavan, day and night.” (CC 2.22.151-3, 156-7)

*sevā sādha-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kārya
vraja-lokānusārataḥ*

“The devotee who has intense desire to attain the *rāgātmikā* mood of one or the other Vrajavasi associates of Krishna should engage in the practices of devotional service in his external body as a practitioner and also internally in his spiritual body. In both cases he follows in the footsteps of the residents of Vraja.” (BRS 1.2.295; CC 2.22.158)

*nijābhīṣṭa kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha pāche ta lāgiyā
nīrantara sevā kare antarmānā hañā*

“In his mind, he constantly serves Krishna while adhering closely to His favorite devotee, one who is most dear to the Lord.” (CC 2.22.159)

*kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janam cāsya
preṣṭhaṁ nija-samīhitam*



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*tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau
kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā*

“Remembering Krishna and one of His dearest and closest devotees, one should constantly remain absorbed in hearing about their loving relations. In this way, one should make one’s permanent residence in Vraja.” (BRS 1.2.294, CC 2.22.160)

The five principal relations are passivity, servitude, friendship, parental love and consortherhood. Those people and things that have a relation with Krishna in the mood of passivity, *śānta-rasa*, include His cows, flute, the trees in Vraja, His stick and horn, etc. Those in the relation of servitude include Raktaka, Patraka, Chitraka and others. Krishna’s friends are Balaram, Sridama, Sudama and others. Krishna’s lovers are Radhika, Lalita, and so many others. Mental service to Krishna in Vraja under the direction of these eternal associates is the essence of all instructions.

First one must take shelter of a genuine spiritual master and then follow the spiritual path that he has delineated. If one does not do so, there is no possibility of entering into the esoteric aspects of devotional life. If an aspirant does not follow the directions of a genuine guru, then by prematurely entering into such matters, thinking that he is eligible for such esoteric understanding, his material attachments will simply increase and his spiritual life will be doomed. If one cannot transcend the material conception of life, then one will never become eligible to enter into the divine, spiritual plane. For this reason it is repeatedly stressed to those desiring to advance in bhajan that they should chant the Holy Name without offenses, for this is the way to attain love for Krishna—*niraparādha laile nāma pāya prema-dhana*. These are the words of the Lord Himself, so we should be especially careful to engage in the worship of the Holy Name according to this instruction and then we can be confident that He will be merciful and give us the qualifications to cultivate absorption on His form, virtues and pastimes.

Common people without any conception of the divine rasa, though under the thrall of material emotions of anger and lust, falsely present themselves as knowledgeable about these things and sing the songs of the ancient authorities who wrote about Krishna’s transcendental pastimes, thus committing an unpardonable offense to them. Our most worshipable Śrīla Prabhupada could not tolerate this kind of participation in such activities by those who are completely unqualified. Those who exhibit mundane musical ability, but have no inner spiritual understanding of the pastimes, may make a show of distributing the sacred experience of rasa, but they will inevitably end up confusing the mundane and spiritual moods.

*avaśṇava-mukhodgīrṇaṁ
pūtaṁ hari-kathāṁṛtaṁ
śravaṇaṁ naiva kartavyaṁ
sarpocchiṣṭaṁ yathā payaḥ*

“One should not hear the pure nectarean sounds of Krishna-kathā from the mouth of a non-Vaishnava any more than one should drink milk that has been touched by the lips of a serpent.” (*Padma-purāṇa*)

Scriptural statements like this show that those who participate in lila kirtan and other pseudo-devotional activities for the material sensual pleasure of hearing beautiful sounds do not gain any real spiritual benefit. Both the singer and the hearer become submerged in the ocean of *anartha*. If the entire tradition of lila kirtan or *rasa-gāna* should be lost to the world as a result, so be it.

In the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, it is stated:

*gīta-nṛtyāni kurvīta
deva-dvijādi-tuṣṭaye
na jīvanāya yuñjīta
vipro pāpa-bhiyā kvacit*

“One may engage in song and dance for the pleasure of the deity and the brahmins, but a brahmin should never use song and dance to make a living, for fear of committing sin.” (HBV 8.265)



Engaging in musical activity to make a living is just another kind of sense gratification. The Bhagavata also says that one should not make a living from teaching the scriptures (SB 7.13.8—*na vyākhyām upayujīta*). One should not use the most precious spiritual subject matter as a means to making a living as though it were just another ordinary tool or medium of trade. Srila Prabhupada considered this to be particularly detestable. Throughout his life, he vehemently protested against those who displayed the Lord's forms, gave mantra initiation, or distributed prasada and charanamrita as means of making a livelihood. Because of this, his preaching was not particularly appreciated in certain devotee circles.

Even though the ritualistic priests (Smartas) may hold a different opinion, Srila Sanatan Goswami, a main leader or acharya of the Madhva Gaudiya line, has confirmed that all persons, irrespective of caste, can be elevated by the process of spiritual initiation (diksha) to perform the worship of the Salagram Sila deity.

*vinītān atha putrādīn
saṁskṛtya pratibodhayet*

"One should instruct one's submissive sons and disciples [in deity worship] after purifying them with the appropriate ritual (*saṁskāra*)."

According to this injunction, an initiated Vaishnava, who is praised by even the gods like Shiva, can be given the *upanayana-saṁskāra*, or brahminical initiation, as well as the five rites or *saṁskāras* of spiritual initiation, known as *tāpa*, *puṇḍra*, *nāma*, *mantra*, *yāga*:

*tāpaḥ puṇḍras tathā nāma
mantra yāgaś ca pañcamah
amī hi pañca-saṁskārāḥ
paramaikānta-hetavaḥ*

"The five purificatory processes that lead to single-minded devotion are: (1) *tāpa*, branding with the symbols of Vishnu³; (2) *puṇḍra*, the tilak markings appropriate to the discipline line; (3) *nāma*, a name

symbolizing the disciple's relationship to Krishna; (4) the mantra, and (5) *yāga*, or sacrifice for the sake of Vishnu." (*Padma-purāṇa*)

In his holy treatise *Prameya-ratnāvalī*, Srila Baladeva Vidyabhushan has defined the word *yāga* in the above verse as deity worship. Many of Mahaprabhu's associates, though being of other castes (such as *vaidya*, *karāṇa* or *kāyastha*), wore the sacred thread after initiation and took brahmin disciples.

The scripture says that through initiation, one becomes twice-born or, in other words, a brahmin (*dīkṣā-vidhānena dvijatvaṁ jāyate nṛṇām*). This applies to everyone. Srila Prabhupada held this statement as the foundation of the *daiva-varṇāśrama* system. Every human being has a right to engage in devotion (*bhaktāu nṛ-mātrasyādhikāritā*). Therefore it is said,

*caṇḍālo'pi dvija-śreṣṭhaḥ
hari-bhakti-parāyaṇaḥ
hari-bhakti-vihīnaś ca
dvijo'pi śvapacādhamaḥ*

"An outcaste is the best of the twice-born if he is devoted to Lord Hari. On the other hand, one who has no devotion is worse than an outcaste, even if born as a brahmin."

Testimonies such as these indicate the supremacy of devotion. Devotion is the eternal activity of the soul. Anyone in whom this activity is observed should be revered as much as a person who is born in the priestly caste. For this reason Vrindavan Das Thakur wrote:

*je te kule vaiṣṇavera janma kene nahe
tathāpiha sarvottama sarva-śāstra kahe*

"All the scriptures say that Vaishnavas are the best of humanity, no matter what their status at birth." (Cbh 2.10.100)

Srila Krishna Das Kaviraja Goswami's famous vers-



es on the subject in Chaitanya Charitamrita read as follows:

*nīca-jāti nahe kṛṣṇa-bhājane ayogya
sat-kula-vipra nahe bhājanera yogya
jei bhaje sei baṛa abhākta hīna chāra
kṛṣṇa-bhājane nāhi jāti-kulādi-vicāra*

“A person born in a low family is not unfit for discharging devotional service to Krishna, nor is one fit for devotional service simply because he is born in an aristocratic family of brahmins. Anyone who takes to devotional service is exalted, whereas a non-devotee is always condemned and abominable. Therefore in the discharge of devotional service to the Lord, there is no consideration of one’s family status.” (CC 3.4.66-7)

According to those who consider the law of karma to be the most important principle, the principles of *daiva-varṇāśrama* society are not acceptable, but rather one in which the socio-religious hierarchies are determined by birth alone. The *Padma-purāṇa* states very clearly that anyone who looks at a Vaishnava in terms of his caste or bodily identity is of a hellish mentality.

Once, a huge public debate was organized in Baligha, Midnapore, to debate the relative positions of brahmins and Vaishnavas. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was still alive at that time, but was playing the role of an ordinary mortal bedridden with illness. Being unable to go himself, he sent Srila Prabhupada as his representative, empowering him to protect the dignity of the Vaishnavas. The meeting was presided over by Sri Madhusudana Goswami Sarvabhauma and Sri Visvambharananda Deva Goswami of Gopiballabhpur. Srila Prabhupada delivered an erudite lecture in which he explained both concepts in great detail, ultimately proving uncompromisingly the superiority of the Vaishnavas over born brahmins. His speech was later published as a book, *Brāhmaṇa o Vaiṣṇava tāratamya-viśayaka siddhānta* (“The correct understanding of the relative positions of Brahmins and Vaishnavas”). The conclusion was that an initiated devotee engaged

wholeheartedly in the worship of the deity is worshipable to even a brahmin.

Mahaprabhu could not tolerate transgressions of etiquette. All people should therefore be joyful to hear that a Vaishnava has a higher status than anyone of any other caste or race. Certainly a saintly brahmin is to be highly regarded and everyone should therefore give such a person his due respect. But Lord Krishna says that worship of the devotee is dearer to Him than even His own worship. Of course, a brahmin who has become a devotee of the Lord should also be respected as a devotee.

Srila Prabhupada considered the printing press an important tool for the wide publicity and propagation of Mahaprabhu’s teachings. He would refer to it as the “Big Drum” (*bṛhat mṛdaṅga*) because its sound could not only travel great distances, but reverberate for a greater length of time. Srila Prabhupada gained much experience in proof-reading and other press-related work in his boyhood while assisting his father, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, produce his publications. Later, when he established his own press, first at Shargar, then at Mayapur, Krishnagar, Ultadingi Junction Road and Bagh Bazaar, he published many books and periodicals including the monthly *Harmonist*, the weekly *Gaudīya*, *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, *Bhagavad Gita* with commentary, *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, *Chaitanya-maṅgala*, *Chaitanya Bhagavata*, *Jaiva Dharma*, *Caitanya-sikṣāmṛta*, *Mahaprabhura Sikṣā*, *Sikṣāṣṭaka*, *Upadeśāmṛta*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā*, *Śaraṇāgati*, *Kalyāṇa-kalpa-taru*, *Gītāvalī*, *Gīti-mālā*, *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*, *Śrī-Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya*, etc.

It is worth taking special note of Srila Prabhupada’s exemplary service to Sri Dham Mayapur, the transcendental birthplace of Lord Gaura hari. Srila Prabhupada underwent many mystical experiences at the Yoga Pith and Srivas Angan. He beheld the Saraswati River in the Jalangi, and the currents of the three sacred rivers, the Saraswati, Yamuna and Gangeś, all flowing constantly within the Ganges itself. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur wrote of a similar vision in some of his songs, such as *Kabe gaura-vane*



suradhunī-tāṭe, where he says, “When will I beg rice from an outcaste household and drink water from the Saraswati River?” The confluence of the river Saraswati and Ganges in Mayapur (Triveni) was especially dear to him.

With the help of a wealthy disciple, the late Sakhi Charan Bhakti Vijaya, Srila Prabhupada fulfilled Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s prediction of an extraordinary temple being built at Sri Yoga Pith. When the foundation of the skyscraper temple was being dug, on June 13, 1934, a four-armed deity of Vishnu was discovered in the ground. Srila Prabhupada studied the *Siddhārtha-saṁhitā* and, according to the positioning of the weapons and symbols in the deity’s hands, identified it as Adhokshaja Vishnu accompanied by His *Śrī*, *Bhū* and *Nīla* potencies. Several expert archeologists, including Sri Ram Prasad Chanda, attested to the deity’s antiquity. Srila Prabhupada commented later that this was the deity formerly worshiped by Sri Jagannath Mishra himself. This beautiful deity is currently being worshiped at the Yoga Pith temple in Mayapur.

Formerly, a jackfruit tree stood on the site of the current Yoga Pith temple. I personally had the good fortune to taste some of the delicious, juice-filled fruit from that tree. Our parama gurudeva, Gaura Kishor Das Babaji often used to come to sit and chant beneath this tree. In those days, Prabhupada himself used to live in the servants’ quarters in the Yoga Pith compound, a building that has since been razed. On one occasion Prabhupada woke up late at night and saw Babaji Maharaj sitting under the tree performing his bhajan. Babaji Maharaj made his home in a bamboo shelter in Ranir Chora, on the other side of the river in Nabadwip town. Prabhupada wondered when he had come and why he had come at such an unusual hour. The last ferry normally crossed the Ganges at 10 o’clock and Babaji Maharaj had almost completely lost his sight, or at least was undergoing the pretense of having such a deficiency in a mortal body. The road from the ferry dock would have been practically impassable for him, but who could have brought him there at this time of night?

Prabhupada asked Babaji Maharaj all these questions and Maharaj simply answered, “Somebody’ took me across the river. Then ‘somebody’ took me by the hand and brought me here.” It did not take long for Prabhupada to understand that this “somebody” was no ordinary person. Gaura Kishor Das Babaji used to come frequently to roll in the dust at the Yoga Pith and at Srivas Angan, ecstatically crying out the names of the Pancha Tattva or loudly chanting the Maha Mantra. If Prabhupada sent him any fruit or vegetable that had been grown there, Babaji Maharaj would touch it to his forehead and his heart and then offer it to his Gaura-Nitai deities before honoring it as prasad.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur installed deities of Gaura and Vishnupriya at the Yoga Pith in the Bengali year 1300 (1894). A small temple was built to house the deities through a large number of small donations. Facing this temple was a bamboo and thatch-roofed shelter for kirtans and lectures. The annual meetings of the Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracārīṇī Sabhā were held in this structure. Many scholars and gentlemen came there from Kuliya (the present-day city of Nabadwip) and Baman Pukur to attend these meetings. The independent prince of Tripura was the permanent chairman of these meetings, while Prabhupada was the acting director. Every year, scholars and devotees proclaimed the glories of Mahāprabhu’s holy land. This annual meeting continues to be held at the Yoga Pith on Mahāprabhu’s appearance day.

To enlighten others and increase publicity about the Holy Dham, Srila Prabhupada invited time and again many eminent and dignified people such as the Maharajah of Tripura and the then governor of Bengal, Sir John Anderson, to Mayapur. Every year was highlighted by the Nabadwip parikrama, in which the devotees visited all the important holy places throughout the 16-kros land of Nabadwip. This was followed by the birth-anniversary celebrations of Mahāprabhu.

Srila Prabhupada had planned that all the land from Chandrasekhara Bhavan in the north to Hulore Ghat



at the extreme south should be known as "Greater Mayapur." We often heard his prophecy that one day this entire area would become a city of Krishna devotees filled with many temples and monasteries and the auspicious sounds of gongs, bells, drums and the chanting of the names of the Lord.

Srila Prabhupada used to remark that Lord Gaurasundara was eternally performing congregational chanting and dancing with His associates in this holy land of Mayapur.

*adyāpiha sei līlā kare gorā rāya
kono kono bhāgyavāne dekhibāre pāya
andhibhūta cakṣu jāra viṣaya dhūlite
kirūpe se para-tattva pāibe dekhite*

"Lord Gauranga still engages in His pastimes here today. Some very fortunate souls are able to see them. How can those whose eyes have been deprived of their sight by the dust of sense desire ever see this Supreme Truth?"

Even today, many fortunate people have heard the mystical sounds of gongs and drums accompanying many voices joined together in sankirtan at the Yoga Pith or Srivas Angan in Mayapur. Srila Prabhupada personally experienced this many a time. We ourselves have observed the transformation of ordinary materialistic persons whose hearts have been hardened by the false arguments of worldly scholars after they come to Mayapur, particularly the Yoga Pith. It is as though they cannot resist the spiritual influence of the site. Their argumentativeness comes to a halt and they feel obliged to lower their heads, in humility.

Only those who have committed so many offenses to the Holy Name and to the Dham, those who are hard-hearted and filled with envy, are deprived of devotion and faith in the divine abode. They become faultfinders, and as the saying goes, "Even in a jeweled palace, ants only see the holes" (*maṇi-maya-mandira-madhye paśyati pipilikā chidram*). Therefore Krishna Das Kaviraja Goswami wrote that

everyone was washed away in the flood of love started by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu—with the exception of the quarrelsome impersonalists and atheists, who fled it in fear.

*uchalila prema-vanyā cau-dike berāya
strī vṛddha bālaka yuvā sabāre dubāya
saj-jana durjana paṅgu jaḍa andha-gaṇa
prema-vanyāya dubāila jagatera jana*

"The flood of love for Krishna swelled in all directions, and everyone—men, women and children of all ages—were inundated by it. The flood of love for Krishna immersed everyone in the entire world, regardless of whether they were gentlemen, rogues, lame, invalid or blind." (CC 1.7.25-6)

*māyāvādī karma-niṣṭha kutārkika-gaṇa
nindaka pāṣaṇḍī jata paṇuwā adhama
sei saba mahā-dakṣa dhānā palāila
sei vanyā tā-sabāre chunite nārila*

"The mayavadis, fruitive workers, the argumentative, blasphemers, atheists and inferior students were very expert in avoiding the flood of prema. They ran away and so it could not touch them." (CC 1.7.29-30)

Besides discovering numerous lost sites of Mahaprabhu's pastimes, Srila Prabhupada did many other things to increase the glories of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's holy land. In particular, on March 18, 1927, he established the *Para-vidyā-piṭha*, or "School of Divine Knowledge" to glorify Mahaprabhu, the husband of the transcendental goddess of learning. Subjects taught at this institution included Jiva Goswami's grammar, *Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa*, all aspects of the Vedic literature including the *Sruti*, *Smṛiti*, *Nyāya*, *Prasthāna*, etc. Of course, particular attention was given to the study of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and other devotional scriptures. He also established a similar institution for the study of devotional life called the *Anukūla-kṛṣṇānuśīlanāgāra* ("School for the favorable culture of Krishna") in 1936. Similarly a high-class English-language school



for spiritual instruction, the Bhaktivinode Institute, was opened in 1931. Later on, the Bhaktivinode Institute was made into a "higher secondary" school.

On March 7, 1918, on the auspicious occasion of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's appearance day, the deities of Guru-Gauranga and Radha-Govinda were consecrated at the house of Chandrasekhara Acharya and the Sri Chaitanya Math was established. Five years later, work began on the construction of a 29-spire temple at Chaitanya Math. It was built according to the idea of Srila Prabhupada in which the deities of Guru-Gauranga and Radha-Govinda would be installed in the main deity room, while in the four corners the founders of the four sampradayas (Lakshmi, Brahma, Rudra, and the four Kumaras) with their acharyas (Ramanuja, Madhva, Vishnu Swami, and Nimbarka) would be installed.

The main branch of Chaitanya Math was the Calcutta Gaudiya Math. It was first established in 1920 at 1 Ultadingi Junction Road. In 1930, it was moved to the newly built temple in Bagh Bazaar. Many other branches were opened throughout India during Prabhupada's lifetime.

As discussed, Srila Prabhupada worked tirelessly to propagate the pure devotional message of Sriman Mahaprabhu through books and journals. He established four main printing presses in Calcutta, Krishnagar, Mayapur and Cuttack. From these and other presses, my godbrothers printed over 100 books and different monthly, bi-monthly, weekly, and even daily journals in the English, Bengali, Oriya and Assamese languages. They also made unimaginable efforts to preach and give lecture and kirtan programs through the length and breadth of India; many also went to foreign countries to preach under his bidding. Srila Prabhupada thus made the fulfillment of the desires of Lord Chaitanya and that of His divine manifestation, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, the primary purpose of his life. Nevertheless, he never failed to maintain his daily vow of chanting one lakh or 64 rounds of the Lord's names and instructed all his disciples to do likewise. He also told us to be

careful about laxity in our worship of the Holy Name. Along with this, we must organize our time so that we can also study and write books and articles and engage in preaching activities. He would say, "Be careful, brother, that not a day goes by without the Holy Name" (*dekho bhāi, nāma vinā dina nāhi jāya*). Those given the responsibility for a particular aspect of this service would come and meet with Prabhupada, leaving him inspired and enthusiastic.

Whenever Srila Prabhupada became aware of a text or discourse attacking the doctrine of pure devotion, he would immediately call one of his scholarly disciples to write a refutation of such opposing arguments. He was like a bright and fiery sun that destroyed the darkness of misapprehension of the Lord's doctrine and had an incomparable ability to still the tongues of his opponents. He detested those who accepted adjustment or compromise with deviant philosophies on the principle of mutual permissiveness as exemplified in the Hindi saying, *tum bhī cup, ham bhī cup*—"You say nothing and I'll say nothing." Prabhupada was the perfect personification of the statement, *nirapekṣa nā haile dharma nā jāya rakṣaṇe*—"Religious principles cannot be maintained unless one is uncompromising" (CC 3.3.23). Prabhupada never supported the idea that one could protect pure devotion while compromising with the nonsense of heterodox doctrine or the unharmless combination of devotional sentiments (*rasābhāsa*). He kept a strict code of behavior according to the instruction of Sriman Mahaprabhu.

*asat-saṅga-tyāga ei vaiṣṇava ācāra
strī-saṅgi eka asādhu kṛṣṇābhakta āra*

"The behavior of the devotee is characterized by complete avoidance of bad association, i.e., that of the materialistic sense-enjoyers and the non-devotee atheists." (CC 3.12.195)

*tato duḥsaṅgam utsrjya
satsu sajjeta buddhimān
santa evāsya chindanti
mano-vyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ*



“An intelligent person should therefore abandon all bad association and stay in the company of devotees. Only such holy persons can cut through one’s unhealthy mental attachments with their powerful words.” (SB 11.26.26)

As long as there is no effulgent acharya with such power, the Gaudiya Vaishnava world finds itself endangered and helpless. Other than he, who will stand up to injustice, taking up the pen with a lion’s courage or giving lectures like a lion’s roar? We pray to Srila Prabhupada, the manifestation of Baladeva, to protect us and give us the spiritual strength we need to maintain our spiritual life, for the Upanishads say: “No one realizes the atman without strength” (*nāyam ātmā bala-hīnena labhyaḥ*).

Srila Prabhupada had extraordinary knowledge about the secrets of the disciplic succession. He began the compilation of the *Vaiṣṇava-māñjuṣā* dictionary of Vaishnava terminology and other necessary information. Four fascicles of the dictionary came out between 1922 and 1925, but the fifth volume was only partially completed. His powers of recall were astounding. Every time he lectured, he would introduce many fresh and interesting details with such skill that the audience would be left spell-bound. We would try to note all these ideas with a deft hand, but would still miss many points. Later, we would bring the notes in article form and Srila Prabhupada would personally correct them. Many of these lectures were published in the weekly *Gauḍiya* magazine.

Prabhupada’s extraordinary scholarship was evident even in “*Baṅge Samājikatā*” (“Bengali social traditions”), an early article he published in 1900 when he was only 26 years old. In this article he criticized many social customs and religious sects. In 1886, Prabhupada wrote an account of the life of Prahlāda in five chapters of Bengali verse. And, of course, he had unequalled astrological knowledge. At one time, he published two monthly magazines on the subject: *Brhaspati* (“Jupiter”) and *Jyotirvit* (“The Astrologer”). He also published a number of books on astrology.

When he became fully dedicated to spiritual life, Srila Prabhupada interrupted his study of this subject and put all his efforts into writing and publishing spiritual literature.

Prabhupada wrote many in-depth and well-researched articles on devotional subjects for Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* monthly magazine. He studied the important texts of all the four Vaishnava schools, especially the *Śrī-bhāṣya*, *Prapannāmṛta* and other books of the Ramanuja sampradaya. He learned a great deal about the institution of tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa from many important and learned renunciates of that school. Starting in 1899, he published a series of articles on Srinath Muni, Yamunacharya, Ramanuja, Divyasuri or Alwar, Goda Devi, the eligibility for *pāñcarātri*ka practices, the dust of the lotus feet of the devotee, Kulashekhara, Vishnuchitta and other subjects connected to the Ramanuja line.

Prabhupada also had a scholar of Veda and Vedānta, Admar Bitthalacharya, brought to Mayapur from the main center of the Madhva school at Udupi. He then had us learn *Brahma-sūtras*, *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣads*, Trivikramacharya’s life history of Madhvacharya (*Śrī-Madhva-vijaya*), *Nyāya-sudhā*, *Dvādaśa-stotra* and other works of the sampradaya. Prabhupada also had Pandit Bitthalacharya write a Vaishnava commentary on the eleven principal Upanishads (*Īśa*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Praśna*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍukya*, *Aitareya*, *Taittirīya*, *Chāndogya*, and *Bṛhadāranyaka*). Unfortunately, this commentary was lost sometime after Prabhupada’s disappearance and no one has been able to find it. Many important historical details about the different Vaishnava schools can be found in Prabhupada’s commentaries on the Chaitanya Bhagavata, Chaitanya Charitamrita, and Srimad Bhagavatam.

Srila Prabhupada wished to publish the *Govinda-bhāṣya*, the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*’s Tenth Canto, *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā* and *Sarva-saṁvādinī* along with his own commentaries, but he was so involved with other



tasks that he was never able to fulfill these wishes.

Mayavada is a doctrine that opposes devotion to Krishna. Srila Prabhupada found it quite unbearable to even hear the name of this philosophy. Mahaprabhu cautioned,

*jīvera nistāra lāgi sūtra kaila vyāsa
māyāvādi-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva-nāśa*

“Vyasadeva wrote the Vedanta sutras for the salvation of the living entities, but if they hear the interpretation of the mayavadis, they will go to ruin.” (CC 2.6.169)

*vaiṣṇava hañā jebā śārīraka-bhāṣya śune
sevyā-sevaka-bhāva chāri āpanāre īśvara māne
mahā-bhāgavata jei kṛṣṇa prāṇa-dhana jāra
māyāvāda-śravaṇe citta avaśya phire tānra*

“When a Vaishnava listens to Shankara’s *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*, the mayavada commentary upon Vedanta Sutra, he gives up making a distinction between master and servant and considers himself the Supreme Lord. Hearing the mayavada philosophy will unfailingly change the consciousness of even a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee, whose life and soul is Krishna.” (CC 3.2.95-6)

*prabhu kahe māyāvādi kṛṣṇe aparādhi
brahma ātmā caitanya kahe niravadhi
ataeva tāra mukhe nā āise kṛṣṇa-nāma
kṛṣṇa-nāma kṛṣṇa-svarūpa duita samāna*

“Mayavadi impersonalists are offenders to Krishna. They constantly repeat words like Brahman, atman and *caitanya*. As a result, they are unable to utter Krishna’s holy name. Krishna’s name and essence are the same.” (CC 2.17.129-130)

*ataeva kṛṣṇa-nāma nā āise tāra mukhe
māyāvādi-gaṇa yāte mahā bahir-mukhe*

“Therefore the holy name of Krishna does not come from the mouths of the mayavadis, for they are completely opposed to the Lord.” (CC 2.17.143)

Many people contend that after receiving the mercy of Lord Chaitanya, the mayavadi Sri Prakashananda Saraswati became known as Sri Prabodhananda Saraswati, the author of *Śrī-Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi* and other devotional books. This contention was vehemently rejected by Srila Prabhupada. In his *Anubhāṣya* (2.17.115), Srila Prabhupada explained: “The spiritual master and uncle of Sri Gopal Bhatta Goswami, Srila Prabodhananda Saraswati, used to live in Sri Rangam and was a tridandī-sannyāsi in the Ramanuja sampradaya. He is not to be confused with his contemporary Prakashananda Saraswati who was an eka-dandī sannyasi of the Shankaracharya sect living in Benares.”

Prabhupada also wrote on Prakashananda in several places, such as his comments on Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.7.62, 2.7.65 and 2.17.104-143, where he tells about his character before meeting Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. For information about his activities after receiving the Lord’s mercy, one can look at Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.25.5-160, as well as Chaitanya Bhagavata, *Madhya-khaṇḍa* 3 and 20.

Prabodhananda Saraswati’s *Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi* is an invaluable jewel for the Gaudiya Vaishnavas. Nowadays, other Vaishnava schools claim this book as their own production. If Srila Prabhupada were present today, he would be able to resolve this problem.

In the morning before his entrance into the Lord’s eternal pastimes, Srila Prabhupada requested Srimad Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhar Maharaj to sing Narottama Das Thakur’s *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada* and Navina Krishna Vidyānāra to sing Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s *Tuhu dayā-sāgara tārayite prāṇī*, written on the basis of the second verse of the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. By asking for the first song to be sung, Srila Prabhupada was underlining the importance of the instructions he had given a week earlier on December 23. He thus revealed his personal commitment to the leadership of Sri Rupa and Raghunath Goswamis, as well as indicating the esoteric aspect of his own devotional life. With it, he also signaled the true identity of our sampradaya.

The *Śikṣāṣṭaka* song contains the following verse:

tuwā dayā aichana parama udārā
atīśaya manda nātha bhāga hāmārā
nāhi janamala nāme anurāga mora
bhaktivinoda citta duḥkha vibhora

“How great, O Lord, is Your mercy; how great Your supreme generosity! And how distressingly unfortunate am I: I have developed no affection for chanting Your holy name. Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s mind is filled with distress.” (*Gītāvalī, Śikṣāṣṭaka, 2*)

On hearing these verses, Srila Prabhupada clasped his hands to his forehead and profuse tears of humility rolled down his cheeks. These personal gestures were meant to remind us of our lamentable plight in not having any attraction for the Holy Name. The Name has all potency and is not dependent on time or the purity of the chanter. It is only through attachment and diligent worship of the Holy Name that we can gain the wealth of *rāgānugā bhakti*. Out of affection for his disciples, Srila Prabhupada repeated his instruction from December 23: “Narottama Das Thakur has explained Rupa and Raghunath’s spiritual understanding. It is best to follow that understanding.”

“I give all of you my blessings, whether you are present here or somewhere far away. Remember that our only duty and religion is to preach service to the Lord and His devotees.”

Srila Prabhupada, our most worshipable spiritual master, has bestowed his affectionate blessings not only on the handful of people who became his disciples, but also to his grand-disciples and all those who will come to this line of disciplic succession in the future. There is no cause for loss of hope or fear, for Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s disciplic line will never cease. This is the assurance of Srila Prabhupada, the world teacher. He is eternally present among us. He is our Lord not only for this birth; He is our Lord birth after birth. Prabhupada’s direct blessings are our great assurance and our only source of strength. Those following in his footsteps should take his mer-

ciful instructions on their heads in mutual cooperation and accept Sri Radha’s eternal dear one and foremost follower of Srila Rupa Goswami, Srila Prabhupada, as their center. All perfections will be attained on pleasing Sri Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada.

Rupa Goswami also listed the first steps of devotional life as follows:

guru-padāśrayas tasmāt
kṛṣṇa-dikṣādi-śikṣaṇam
viśrambhena guroḥ sevā

“First take shelter of a spiritual master, then take initiation and instruction from him. Then serve the spiritual master with faith and devotion.” (*BRS 1.2.74*)

Many other proverbial sayings were dear to Prabhupada, such as *saṅgha-śaktiḥ kalau yuge*—“In the age of Kali, there is strength in numbers.” *āra kālī kene?*—“Don’t put off ‘til tomorrow what you can do today.” *tūrṇam yateta*—“get down to the business of spiritual life immediately” (*SB 11.9.29*).

Give up (*udapāśya*) all pride and egoism, anger, hatred, jealousy, resentment, and other faults and accept the verdict of the devotee Bhagavata and the book Bhagavata. O brothers, come. We will surrender ourselves to the feet of our spiritual master and Sri Gauranga. We will bathe our entire being in the nectar of the Holy Name and announce the victory of the Holy Name to the entire world, which is immersed in the three-fold material sufferings. We shall raise the Holy Name’s flag of victory. If we can do this, then the conflagration of material life will be extinguished and the cooling rays of the moonlight of the ultimate good will shine upon us. True peace will descend on the world.

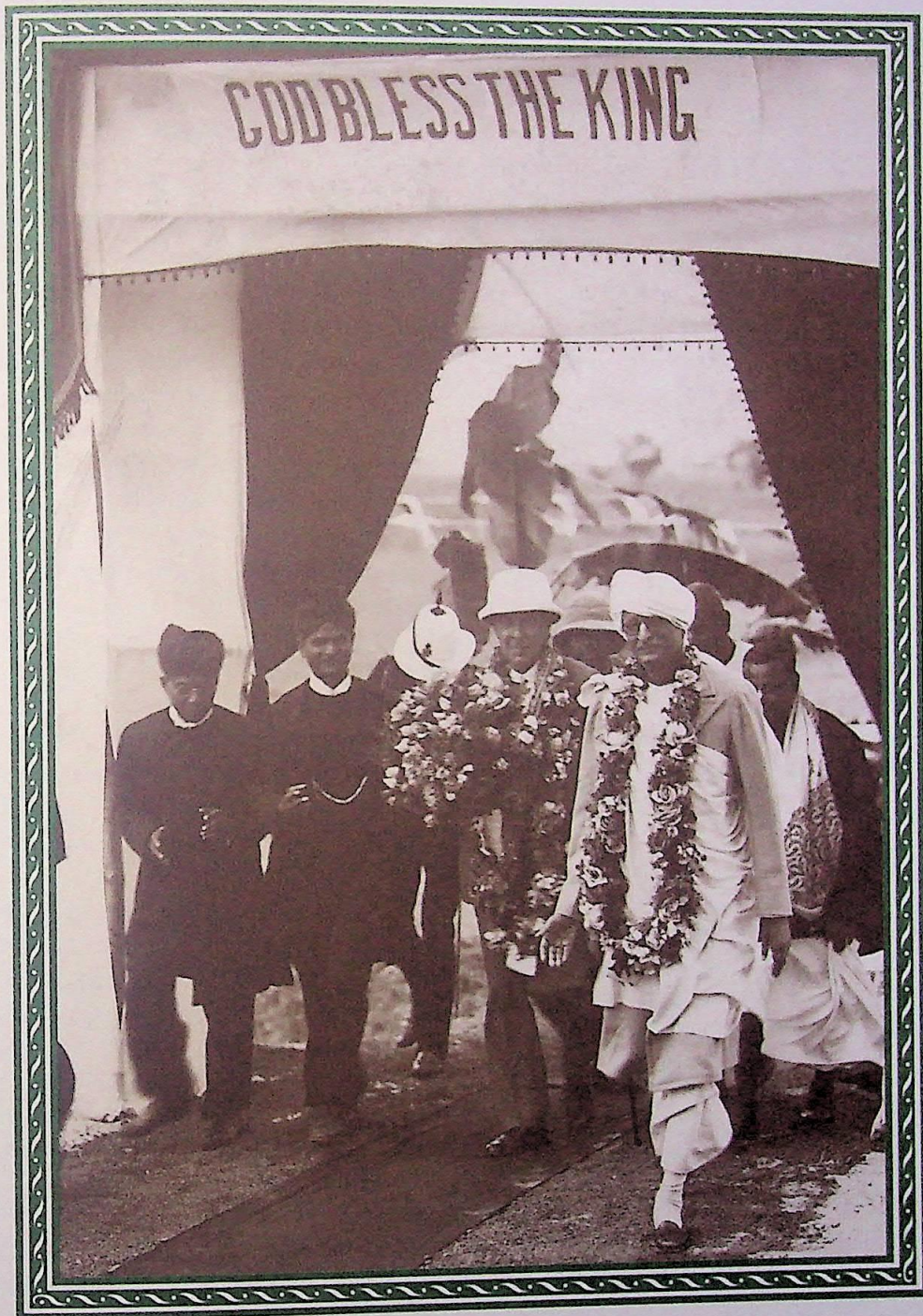
¹ Named by Srila Prabhupada *Avidyāharaṇa nāṭa-mandira*, “The kirtan hall that destroys ignorance.”



² Burma was the scene of anti-Indian demonstrations in 1937 and was separated from the rest of the British Empire in India in the same year. The general anti-Indian sentiment made it difficult for the preaching mission to continue in Rangoon.

³ This is not practiced in the Gaudiya Vaishnava sampradaya. See *The Art of Sadhana*, 120-122.





Srila Prabhupada and the Governor of West Bengal, Sir John Anderson

The Meaning of Vyasa Puja

Māghī kṛṣṇā-pañcamī is the auspicious appearance day or tithi of our most worshipable spiritual master, Nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. All our maṭhas take special care to properly observe this festival every year. We call the appearance day of our spiritual master, Sri Sri Vyasa Puja. The full-moon day of the month of Aṣṭarh (June-July) is also popularly known as Guru Purnima. We have heard it said that this is actually the birthday of the divine incarnation, Sri Veda Vyasa. Therefore, all schools of religious thought that claim to follow Vyasa worship Him on that day, which is therefore also called Vyasa Puja. Members of the Gaudiya Math, however, consider their guru to be non-different in principle from Vyasadeva; they therefore observe his birthday by worshiping him with guru puja and they call this ceremony Vyasa Puja.

The non-dual supreme truth Vrajendranandan, in His incarnation as Lord Gaurasundara, instituted the tradition of worshipping the spiritual master when He performed Vyasa Puja to Nityananda Prabhu, who is Balaram Himself, at Srivas Angan. In the Gaudiya Math, the first Vyasa Puja took place on February 24, 1924, when Srila Prabhupada's disciples celebrated his fiftieth birthday. This festival took place at No. 1, Ultadingi Junction Road in Calcutta.

The Sanskrit word vyāsa means to divide, to expand or to distribute. Because he divided the one Veda into four parts, the Ṛg, Sāma, Yajur and Artharva-vedas, and also expanded the explanation of the Vedic knowledge in works like Mahabharata and other histories and Puranas, the sage Sri Krishna Dvaipayana was given the title Veda Vyasa. In his

Chaitanya Charitamrita, Krishna Das Kaviraja Goswami wrote that the same title could be given to Vrindavan Das Thakur:

*kṛṣṇa-līlā bhāgavate kahe veda-vyāsa
caitanya-līlāra vyāsa vṛndāvana-dāsa*

“Veda Vyasa narrated the pastimes of Krishna in the Bhagavatam. Vrindavan Das Thakur performed the duties of Vyasadeva in recounting the pastimes of Chaitanya.” (CC 1.8.34)

*bhāgavate kṛṣṇa-līlā varṇilā veda-vyāsa
caitanya-līlāte vyāsa vṛndāvana-dāsa*

“Veda Vyasa described Krishna's pastimes in the Bhagavatam. The Vyasa of Chaitanya lila is Vrindavan Das Thakur.” (CC 1.19.55)

Just as Vrindavan Das was given the title “Vyasa” for expanding the descriptions of Chaitanya's lila in the Chaitanya Bhagavata, the spiritual master similarly performs the work of Vyasadeva by distributing knowledge of the Lord to the conditioned living entities. For this reason the adoration offered to him on his advent is called “Vyasa Puja.”

The “Vyasa Puja” pastimes of Srīman Mahāprabhu have been described by Vrindavan Das Thakur in the fifth chapter of the *Madhya-khaṇḍa* in the Chaitanya Bhagavata and commented on by our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada in his *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya*:

“The Sruti says that from the moment one feels detachment, one is given respite from material sense enjoyment and attains a taste for devotional service to the Lord. There is no preordained time or place

for this to occur. Someone who has lost all interest in sense gratification becomes a homeless wanderer (*parivrājaka*) until he takes shelter of the lotus feet of a spiritual master. The words 'Vyasa Puja' mean nothing more than this acceptance of shelter or surrender at the lotus feet of the spiritual master. The institution is obligatory for all the four stages of life, but those in the renounced order are warned to be especially dutiful in carrying it out.

"The servitors at the Gaudiya Math annually take up the performance of the Vyasa Puja with a spirit of pride. They set aside the *kṛṣṇa pañcamī tithi* of the month of Magh as the special occasion for this performance. Traditions for celebrating Vyasa Puja vary somewhat in different religious schools. Brahmins in any of the four ashrams (*brahmacārī, gr̥hastha, vānaprastha* or *sannyāsa*) are all said to be under the shelter of Vyasa, their guru. As a result, performing Vyasa Puja forms a part of their daily ritual service. The actual Vyasa Puja celebration as an annual festival day is meant to serve as a special occasion to remember one's own spiritual master.

"Vyasa Puja also means offering everything to the service of the spiritual master in the form of works conducive to the fulfillment of his wishes. For this reason, our predecessor spiritual master, Srila Narottama Das Thakur, setting an example for us in the role of a follower of Rupa Goswami, humbly prayed to our principle guru:

*śrī-caitanya-mano'bhīṣṭhaṁ
sthāpitam yena bhūtaḥ
so'yaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ
dadāti sva-padāntikā*

"When will Sri Rupa Goswami, who has fulfilled the wishes of Lord Chaitanya on this earth, give me shelter under his lotus feet?" (*Prema-bhakti-candrikā*)

"The most merciful of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes was to bestow love for Krishna; whatever Srila Rupa Goswami set aside for his followers as medicine for the disease of disinterest in the Lord's

service is the ideal gift to be given the guru on the occasion of Vyasa Puja. Vyasa Puja thus ultimately means the same mood of surrender and faith to the predecessor spiritual masters."

(*Gauḍīya-bhāṣya* 2.5.8-10)

Mahaprabhu came to bestow the gift of devotion in the *unnata-ujjvala-rasa*, that is, the most elevated taste of the "effulgent" (*ujjvala*) or divine erotic mood that was never given by the Lord in any of His previous incarnations. Lord Gaurasundara is the combined form of Radha and Madhava—He is the son of Nanda Maharaj, who has taken the mood and bodily hue of Srimati Radharani. Is there anyone other than He who could reveal this most confidential wealth of devotional practice? And this Lord empowered His dearest personal associate, Srila Rupa Goswami, and caused a perfect understanding of all aspects of spiritual knowledge to awaken in him. Therefore, Srila Krishna Das Kaviraja Goswami said,

*śrī-rūpa-hṛdaye prabhu śakti sañcārīlā
sarva-tattva nirūpiyā pravīṇa karīlā*

"The Lord filled Rupa's heart with spiritual power. He explained all the aspects of devotional doctrine to Rupa and made him expert." (CC 2.19.117)

Kavi Karnapur, the son of Mahaprabhu's beloved associate, Shivananda Sena, wrote two excellent verses in his play, *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka*, which describe the blessings that the Lord showered on Rupa Goswami:

*kālena vṛndāvana-keli-vārtā
lupteti tām khyāpayitum viśiṣya
kṛpāmṛtenābhīṣiṣeca devas
tatraiva rūpaṁ ca sanātanaṁ ca*

"In the course of time, the tidings of Krishna's divine sports in Vrindavan had been lost. To reveal them again in detail, the Lord gave installments of His mercy to Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan in the holy land of Vrindavan." (CCN 9.38)

The Meaning of Vyasa Puja

*priya-svarūpe dayita-svarūpe
prema-svarūpe saha-jābhirūpe
nijānūrūpe prabhur eka-rūpe
tatāna rūpe sva-vilāsa-rūpe*

“The Lord explained the *rasa-śāstra* to Rupa Goswami in a way He did to no other person, for Rupa was the dear friend of Svarupa Damodar. His true identity was that of the Lord’s beloved, divine love was his intrinsic nature, and he also possessed natural beauty. Mahāprabhu knew him to be like unto Himself, and indeed, he was verily the expansion of the Lord.” (CCN 9.39)

In this way, Kavi Karnapur described the way in which Mahāprabhu blessed Rupa and Sanatan in his play *Caitanya-candrodaya*. These two great devotees were also great favorites of all of the Lord’s associates. If ever anyone went to Vrindavan, Mahāprabhu would eagerly ask for news about the brothers, about what they were eating, and how they were performing austerities and their bhajan.

*mahāprabhura jata bara bara bhakta mātra
rūpa-sanātana sabāra kṛpā-gaurava-pātra
keha jadi deṣe jāya dekhi vṛndāvana
tānre praśna karena prabhura pāriṣada-gaṇa
kaha tāhān kaiche rahe rūpa-sanātana
kaiche rahe kaiche vairāgya kaiche bhojana
kaiche aṣṭa-prahara karena śrī-kṛṣṇa-bhajana
tabe praśamsiyā kahe sei bhakta-gaṇa
aniketa duṅhe vane jata vṛkṣa-gaṇa
eka eka vṛkṣera tale eka eka rātri śayana
vipra-gṛhe sthūla-bhikṣā kāhān mādhu-karī
śuṣka ruṭī-cānā cibāya bhoga parihari
karoṇwā-mātra hāte kānthā chinṛā bahir-vāsa
kṛṣṇa-kathā kṛṣṇa-nāma nartana-ullāsa
aṣṭa-prahara kṛṣṇa-bhajana cāri daṇḍa śayane
nāma-saṅkīrtane seha nahe kona dine
kabhu bhakti-rasa-śāstra karaye likhana
caitanya-kathā śune kare caitanya-cintana*

“All of Mahāprabhu’s principal devotees treated Srila Rupa Goswami and Sanatan Goswami with love and respect. If someone returned home to Bengal or Puri

after a pilgrimage to Vrindavan, all the Lord’s associates would inquire, “Tell us how Rupa and Sanatan are doing in Vrindavan? What kind of austerities do they perform and what do they eat? How do they manage to engage in devotional service for a full twenty-four hours every day?”

“The devotee who had returned from Vrindavan would praise Sri Rupa and Sanatan Goswami in the following way: ‘The two brothers have no fixed residence, but lie down each night beneath a different tree in the forest. They sometimes take a meal at a brahmin’s house, or go from door to door merely taking a handful of cooked food from each home. This way, their meals consist of only dry bread and fried chick-peas that they eat without a spirit of enjoyment. Their only possessions are their water pots, quilts, and the torn loincloths that they wear. Even so, they constantly chant Krishna’s holy names, discuss His pastimes and dance jubilantly. They engage in Krishna bhajan for almost twenty-four hours a day, sleeping only an hour and a half, and some days when they are absorbed in chanting the Holy Names they do not rest at all. They either write books on the divine raptures of devotional service or spend their time talking or thinking about Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.’”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita, 2.19.123-131)

The devotees felt great joy at hearing about Rupa and Sanatan’s expertise in bhajan. In fact, such amazing depths of devotion and renunciation are not surprising in those who have received the blessings of Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Rupa Goswami said as much in his invocatory verses of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*hṛdi yasya preranatayā
pravartito’ham varāka-rūpo’pi
tasya hareḥ pada-kamalaṁ
vande caitanya-devasya*

“I worship the lotus feet of Lord Hari in His form as Chaitanya Deva, for through the inspiration He has given my heart, I have undertaken the work of writing this book, even though I am a most miserable wretch.” (BRS 1.1.2)



The closeness of Sri Rupa to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the reason that the revered acharyas of our line have shown such dedication to his leadership. Krishna Das Kaviraja concludes every single chapter of the Chaitanya Charitamrita with the same words of reverence for Rupa and his foremost disciple, Raghunath Das.

*śrī-rūpa-raghunātha-pade jāra āṣa
caitanya-caritāmṛta kahe kṛṣṇa-dāsa*

“Krishna Das, who prays to rejoin the lotus feet of Sri Rupa and Raghunath, recounts the nectarean biography of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.”

Our beloved spiritual master taught us to show our respects to our *parātpara-guru* with the following prayer:

*namo bhaktivinodāya
saccidānanda-nāmine
gaura-śakti-svarūpāya
rūpānuga-varāya te*

“I offer my obeisance to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, who possesses a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss. He is the manifestation of Gauranga’s potency and is the best of the followers of Srila Rupa Goswami.”

Indeed, during his *aprakāṣa-līlā* our most merciful Prabhupada made special mention of taking Sri Rupa and Raghunath as our lead (*anugātya*). In his last instructions given on December 23, 1936, he told:

“All of you please preach the message of Rupa and Raghunath with great enthusiasm. The ultimate object of our desires is to become specks of dust at the lotus feet of the followers of Rupa Goswami. Remain united in following the *āśraya-vigraha* in order to satisfy the transcendental senses of the one, non-dual Supreme Truth. Make your way through this impermanent, transitory life in whatever way you can, keeping the goal of worshiping the Lord foremost in your minds. Don’t abandon this goal, even in the face of hundreds of dangers, insults, or persecutions. Don’t lose your spirit if you see that

the majority of people cannot accept the principle of selfless service to the Supreme Lord. Never abandon your bhajan, hearing and chanting Krishna-katha, the sum and substance of your devotional life. Please always chant the name of the Lord, being humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than the tree.

“This body is like an aging cow, which in ancient times was meant to be offered up in sacrifice. Only we desire to offer the body to Krishna in the sacrifice of the Holy Name established by Sri Krishna Chaitanya and His associates. We do not seek to become heroes performing great works or religious deeds; our true being and our identity is to be the dust at the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Prabhu in life after life. The stream that flows from Bhaktivinoda Thakur will never be dammed up. Remember this and vow to double your efforts to fulfill Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s desires. Amongst you are many capable and worthy individuals. We seek nothing for ourselves; our only motto is:

*ādadānas tṛṇam dantair
idam yāce punaḥ punaḥ
śrīmad-rūpa-padāmbhoja-
dhūliḥ syām janma-janmani*

“Taking grass between my teeth, I pray repeatedly that I may become a speck of dust at Sri Rupa Goswami’s lotus feet, birth after birth.”

(Raghunath Das’s *Muktā-caritra*)

“While living in the world, we encounter many difficulties; but there is no need for us to be bewildered by these difficulties—nor need we make any effort to remove them. What is necessary for us, while we are still here, is to learn what will remain after—what will be the nature of our eternal life. Though there may be many things that we do or don’t want, we must come to terms with this duality of attractions and aversions. They will draw us in to the extent that we distance ourselves from Krishna’s lotus feet. We can only begin to comprehend the exquisite taste of service to Krishna’s lotus feet after we transcend worldly attractions and repulsions and are attached

to His holy name.

“The doctrines of Krishna bhakti may at first seem startling, perhaps even perplexing. But every human being is knowingly or unknowingly struggling to eliminate the adventitious elements in life that interfere with the direct experience of eternal fulfillment. Our only obligation is to go beyond duality and to enter that world of eternal fulfillment.

“We have no attachment or hostility for anyone in this world. Any arrangements we make here in this world last but a moment. On the other hand, the need to search out the supreme fulfillment is equally unavoidable for everyone. May all of you work united and in harmony toward the same goal; earn the right to serve the root *āśraya-vigraha*. May the current of ideas propagated by Rupa Goswami flow throughout the world. May we never under any circumstances become indifferent to the seven-tongued sacrificial flame of the Holy Name. If our attraction to it remains ever increasing, we will achieve all perfection. Remain faithful to Rupa Goswami’s followers and preach Rupa and Raghunath’s teachings enthusiastically and fearlessly.”

Since Srila Prabhupada indicated that Bhaktivinoda Thakur is the manifestation of Mahaprabhu Sri Gauranga’s potency and the best of Rupa Goswami’s followers, it is evident that the “stream that flows from Bhaktivinoda Thakur” is the same as that which flowed from Rupa Goswami. Rupa established the heartfelt desire of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu on this earth; therefore, the heartfelt desire of Bhaktivinoda Thakur was to similarly establish Mahaprabhu’s objectives in this world and nothing more.

What then was Mahaprabhu’s heartfelt desire? The answer is found in the Chaitanya Charitamrita: he wished to distribute or bestow the highest, most relishable form of devotional service in the mood of divine consortherhood, something that he had never given before. Then Mahaprabhu went on to specify how one could become eligible for this gift. He wrapped his arms around the necks of Svarupa

Damodar and Ramananda Raya and said, “The topmost means for attaining love for Krishna in this age of quarrel is the chanting of the Holy Name.” Mahaprabhu went on to tell us how to chant in order to experience the awakening of such prema:

*trṇād api sunīcena
taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtaniyāḥ sadā hariḥ*

“One should chant the holy name of the Lord while thinking himself to be lower than the grass. He should be more tolerant than the tree, take no respect for himself and give all respect to others.” (CC 3.20.21)

Without closely following the instruction of this verse, it is impossible to attain the wealth of Vraja prema that was so dear to the heart of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. For this reason, our beloved Srila Prabhupada taught that all perfections come through increasing attachment for the sacrifice of the Holy Name with its seven-flamed sacrificial fire. With this instruction in particular, he put us on our guard.

We thus recognize our Srila Prabhupada to be the best of Sri Rupa and Svarupa Damodar’s successors, and so we prostrate ourselves before him on the ground with a cloth wrapped around our necks in humility and pray with these words:

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya
kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrīmate bhakti-siddhānta-
sarasvatīti nāmine*

“O Srila Prabhupada, you have descended to this earth from the transcendental abode of Goloka at the wish of Lord Krishna Himself and here you are known by the name Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati. I prostrate myself in obeisance to you, Sri Gurudeva, because you are most dear to Lord Krishna; indeed, you are His *prakāśa-vigraha*. O Master! Destroy all vestiges of material ego that pollute me and give me a place at

your lotus feet, making me the servant of your servants." (This is the meaning of the word *namah*.)

*śrī-vārsabhānavī-devī-
dayitāya kṛpābdhaye
kṛṣṇa-sambandha-vijñāna-
dāyine prabhaye namah*

"O Master, you bestow realized knowledge of our relation with Krishna, the son of the King of Vraja, Nanda. You are distressed upon seeing the suffering of others; you are the ocean of unlimited compassion. You are one of the most intimate associates of the daughter of the King Vrishabhanu, Srimati Radharani. For this reason, you identify yourself as *Vārsabhānavī-dayita-dāsa*, the servant of Radha's beloved Krishna. I repeatedly pay my prostrated obeisance at your feet."

*mādhuryojjvala-premādhya-
śrī-rūpānuga-bhakti-da
śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti-
vighrahāya namo'stu te*

"Just as the Supreme Lord has majestic and intimate aspects to His nature, there are majestic and intimate moods of devotion. The most intimate type of devotion is the conjugal love displayed by the gopis in Vraja. Rupanuga bhakti is precisely this erotic mood of devotion, full of the sweetness and brightness of divine love. I pay my obeisance unto you for you bestow this love on all, being the embodiment of Mahaprabhu Sri Gauranga's compassionate energy."

In this verse, there is a single, lengthy compound: *mādhuryojjvala-premādhya-śrī-rūpānuga-bhakti-da śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti-vighrahāya*. The word *mādhuryojjvala* means that the reverential *svakīyā* mood of devotion found in the Queens of Dvaraka like Satyabhama is completely absent from the devotion of the Rupanugas (followers of Sri Rupa). The gopis' love in the *parakīyā* spirit is the essence of *mādhuryojjvala-prema*. The gopis sang to Krishna in the Bhagavatam (10.31.16):

*pati-sutānvaya-bhrātr-bāndhavān
ativilāṅghya te'nty acyutāgatāḥ*

"We have come to You, disregarding our parents, children, brothers and relatives." These words are filled with the exalted, brilliant nature of their devotion as described by Svarupa Damodar: *unnatojjvala-rasān sva-bhakti-śriyam*.

The second half of the compound, *śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti-vighrahāya*, is an explanation of the words *sad-anugraho bhavān* spoken by the demigods to Krishna (SB 10.2.31), meaning that devotees are embodiments of the Lord's compassion. Therefore, it is said that the Lord's mercy follows on that of His devotees (*bhakta-kṛpānugāminī bhagavat-kṛpā*).

*namaste gaura-vāñī-
śrī-mūrtaye dīna-tāriṇe
rūpānuga-viruddhāpa-
siddhānta-dhvānta-hāriṇe*

"O lord, you are the embodiment of Mahaprabhu's divine gospel! O Master! You take away the sufferings of the fallen souls and destroy the darkness of misconceptions that go against the teachings given by Rupa Goswami and his followers. I pay my obeisance to your feet again and again."

Our revered godbrother Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhar Maharaj explained that the words *gaura-vāñī-śrī-mūrtaye* mean that Srila Prabhupada is the embodiment of Harinam sankirtan.

Our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada appeared at 3:30 P.M. on Friday, February 6, 1874 (1280 Bengali, 1795 Śaka), or *kṛṣṇa pañcamī tithi* of the month of Magh, in the home of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur in the holy place where Sri Chaitanya Himself had relished the mood of love in separation from Krishna. Bhaktivinoda Thakur's house, named Narayan Chata, was situated not far from the Jagannath temple on the Grand Road in Puri and was constantly reverberating with the sound of Harinam. Those who saw the effulgent newborn child in the arms of



his mother Bhagavati Devi were all astounded that the umbilical cord was wrapped around his shoulder like a natural brahmin thread. Just as Lord Krishna's birth and activities are extraordinary and superhuman, so too were the birth and activities of His dearest devotee, Srila Prabhupada, His *prakāśa-vigraha* or manifest representative.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur named the child after Jagannath Deva's *parā śakti*, Bimala, calling him Bimala Prasad (*Vimalā-prasāda*). Six months after Prabhupada's appearance, it was time for the Rathayatra festival. That year, by Jagannath's completely independent desire, the cart stopped directly in front of Bhaktivinoda Thakur's house on the main road and simply would not move forward. Jagannath remained motionless in front of Narayan Chata for three whole days. Under Bhaktivinoda Thakur's direction, a kirtan festival was held in front of the Deity for the entire three-day period. Indeed, Srila Prabhupada went through his entire childhood in the midst of an extended festival of Harinam sankirtan.

During one of those three days, his mother brought the six-month-old child to pay obeisances to Lord Jagannath. While there, he stretched out his hands and took the garland from around the Deity's neck. At the same time, Bhaktivinoda gave the six-month-old child Jagannath prasada for the *anna-prāśana* ritual, in which a child eats its first solid food.

Srila Prabhupada stayed in Purushottama Dham for ten months after his birth. After this he travelled to Ranaghat in Bengal in a palanquin with his mother.

While Bhaktivinoda Thakur was stationed in Serampore (Śrīrāmapura), Srila Prabhupada invented a type of phonetic writing that he called Bicanto, or *vikṛnti*. He was only in the fifth grade at the time. One day two years later, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur returned from a visit to Puri with a japa mala made of tulasi. He gave it to Srila Prabhupada, now in the seventh grade, and initiated him in the chanting of the Holy Name and the Nrsingha mantra. During this period, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was writing

Chaitanya-śikṣāmṛta and he would read each chapter to Srila Prabhupada as he completed it.

In 1881, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur started construction of Bhakti Bhavan in Calcutta's Ram Bagan district. While digging the foundations for the building, a small deity of Kurma was found. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur taught his seven-year-old son the rules for deity worship and the Kurma mantra, after which Srila Prabhupada started to regularly wear tilak and perform the deity's puja.

At a very early age, Srila Prabhupada showed an interest in learning, with a particular talent for astrology. Recognizing that his status would be as a guru amongst gurus and a great devotee, *mahābhāgavata*, his teachers gave him the title *Siddhānta-sarasvatī*. In the year 1918 at Vraja-pattana, Sri Mayapur, Srila Prabhupada took tridandī-sannyāsa and thenceforth would bare the name *Parivrājākācārya Tridandī-svāmī* Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati.¹ At other times, he occasionally identified himself as Varshabhanavi Dayita Das.

In 1892, Srila Prabhupada was admitted to the Calcutta Sanskrit College. It did not take him long to go through all the books in the curriculum. He spent most of his time systematically reading all the important books in the college library. In 1898, Srila Prabhupada set off on a pilgrimage with Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur during which they visited Kashi, Prayag, and on the return trip, Gaya. While in Kashi, he met Ram Mishra Shastri, with whom he discussed many aspects of the Ramanuja sampradaya. At about this time, he first began to show the spirit of intense renunciation that ran throughout his lifetime. Starting in 1897, he began following the rules of Chaturmasya according to the Vaishnava scriptures, himself cooking *haviṣyāṇna*, which he would eat directly off the ground without using a plate, and sleeping on the ground without a pillow.

In 1897, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur established his *bhajana-kunja*, his abode of worship, in Nabadwip's Godrumadvipa area near the Saraswati River, calling

it Svānanda-sukhada Kuñja. It was there that Srila Prabhupada first saw his future guru, Srila Gaura Kishor Das Goswami Maharaj, in 1898. He was attracted by the extraordinary character of this Vaishnava paramahansa who was indifferent to all social conventions. Later, on the order of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, he took *bhāgavatī dikṣā* from him in the month of Magh in 1900.

Just prior to this, Srila Prabhupada accompanied Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur on a trip to Balesor and Remuna, where he had darshan of Kshirachora Gopinath. They then traveled on to Bhubaneswar and Puri. He stayed there for some time, engaging in bhajan according to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's instructions until the Thakur advised him to go to Mayapur. Once there, he engaged in intense solitary bhajan with great austerities.

While in Puri, Srila Prabhupada was introduced to the abbot of the Govardhana Math, Madhusudan Tirtha, with whom he had many philosophical discussions. Tirtha Swami held Srila Prabhupada in high esteem. Other people he met in Puri and with whom he engaged in scriptural discussions included Vasudeva Ramanuja Das and Damodar Ramanuja Das of Samadhi Math; Raghunandan Ramanuja Das of Emar Math, Jagannath Das of the Jamayet sampradaya's Papudiya Math, an old ascetic nicknamed Omkara Japi ("one who chants Om") of the Swargadwar Chata, the scholar Sadashiva Mishra, the lawyer Harishchandra Basu, Bihari Das Pujari of the Ganga Mata Math, Radhakanta Math's abbot Narottama Das, Anantacharan Mahanti, and others.

Srila Prabhupada had begun studying the Ramanuja sampradaya earlier, when in Bengal, and had even published books and articles as the results of his research. In 1898, he wrote about Srinath Muni, Yamunacharya and other acharyas of this school in a series of articles that appeared in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*. Before this, he had been provided books in the four South Indian languages by Sundaresvara Srauti, from which he learned about both the Ramanuja and Madhva schools.

In January of 1904, Srila Prabhupada visited Sita Kund and Chandranath. In December of the same year he went to Puri and on February 23, 1905, he went on a pilgrimage to South India. He visited Singhachalam, Rajahmundry, Madras, Perembadur, Tirupati, Conjeevaram, Kumbhakonam, Srirangam, Madurai and other places before returning to Calcutta and Sri Mayapur. In Perembadur, he learned the scriptural rules and regulations surrounding Vaishnava tridaṇḍi-sannyāsa from a member of that order in the Ramanuja sampradaya.

Here we would like to say a few words about Bhaktivinoda Thakur's discovery of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's birthplace. In his autobiography, the Thakur wrote the following words: "I had been carefully studying the devotional scriptures, and as a result of associating with a group of devotees, I found that I was becoming quite disinterested in material life. I thought that I would find myself a place on the banks of the Yamuna in Vrindavan so that I could engage in solitary bhajan. I was writing *Āmnāya-sūtra* at that time... One day I had to go to Tarakeshwara on business. That night, Tarakeshwara Shiva appeared to me in a dream and said, 'You are going to Vrindavan. But in Nabadwip, right near your own home, there is much work still to be done. What have you done about that?'"

In mid-November of 1887, the Thakur was transferred to Krishnagar where he continued his intense study of the Vaishnava scriptures. At around Christmas time, he was visiting Kuliya, the modern city of Nabadwip, in search of the sites of Mahaprabhu's pastimes. He wrote the following account of events that took place in his autobiography: "I had come to Nabadwip to find the places where Mahaprabhu had performed His lilas, but was disappointed at my lack of success. The people of the town seemed to know nothing about any such places. One day, Kamal, a clerk, and I were standing on the roof looking around. At about ten o'clock at night, the sky became very dark and overcast, but I saw a brightly illuminated building on the north side of the Ganges. I asked Kamal whether he also saw it and

was amazed when he said he did. In the morning I went back to the roof of the Queen's House and looked carefully in the direction where I had seen the light. I could see that there was a Tal tree standing there. I made inquiries from other people and they told me that the place was called Ballal Dighi where the ruins of King Ballal Sen's fortress could be found.

"The next Monday, I had to go to Krishnagar, but on Friday I went to Ballal Dighi. There again I had a similar vision and the next morning I set out for the place from which I had seen the light coming. When I arrived there, I asked some of the older residents about the site. They told me that it was the birth-place of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

"From then on, I began reading books like Narahari Thakur's *Parikramā-paddhati* and *Bhakti-ratnākara* and Vrindavan Das's Chaitanya Bhagavata. One by one, I visited each of the villages and neighborhoods mentioned in these books. I wrote *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya* in Krishnagar and sent it to Calcutta for publication. I recounted everything I learned to Dvaraka Babu, an engineer, and he was sufficiently intelligent to grasp the problem. He made a map of the Nabadwip area for me and it was published in a later edition of *Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya*."

In 1893 (Sunday, Magh 3, 1299 Bengali), a public meeting was held in the courtyard of the A.V. School in Krishnagar. After many convincing proofs such as old land deeds and maps were shown, everyone unanimously agreed that the site at Ballal Dighi was indeed Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's birthplace and that they should work to publicize this. The Nabadwip Publicity Committee (Navadvīpa Pracārīṇī Sabhā) was established to this end. The respected scholar Ajitanath Nyayaratna and many other reputable people from Krishnagar became members of this committee. The minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Sabha can be found in the fifth volume of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, number 11, pages 201-207.

Mahaprabhu's appearance day in Bengali year 1300 (1894) was marked by a lunar eclipse. A great kirtan

festival took place during which deities of Gaura and Vishnupriya were installed at the birth site.

In 1920, Srila Prabhupada revived the 16-kros parikrama of Nabadwip Dham, according to the desires of Bhaktivinoda Thakur. The following year, the parikrama was expanded into a nine-day festival.

While staying in Mayapur in 1905, Srila Prabhupada began preaching the message of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and, following in the footsteps of Hari Das Thakur, undertook a vow of chanting a billion (ten crores) Holy Names, chanting a minimum of three lakhs (300,000) every single day. We have heard that the japa beads that Prabhupada used to fulfill this vow were the same ones that Thakur Bhaktivinoda gave him in Serampore when he was just seven years old. Using these very same beads, Prabhupada set the example of unfailingly chanting at least one lakh of Names every single day until he became invisible to this world.

In 1906, Rohini Kumar Ghosh, the nephew of Justice Chandra Madhab Ghosh, had an extraordinary dream telling him to go to Srila Prabhupada and take initiation from him. He thus became Saraswati Thakur's first disciple.

In February 1909, Srila Prabhupada had a cottage built on the site of Chandrasekhara Acharya's house where he continued to engage in his *vrata*. He envisioned the large tank next to the cottage as non-different from Radha Kund.

In 1911, when Bhaktivinoda Thakur was displaying his pastime of being bedridden in *Svānanda-sukhada Kuñja* in Godrumadvīpa, an assembly of hundreds of scholars and pandits was called in Midnapore at the village of Balighai. Many materialistic brahmins were insisting that non-brahmin Vaishnavas were ineligible to initiate brahmins and that initiated non-brahmins could not worship the Salagram Sila form of Vishnu. The meeting was called to debate this issue. Members of the Goswami families who were the acting acharyas in the Vaishnava world took the side of



the Smartas in this matter. Presiding over the meeting was Visvambharananda Deva Goswami, the great Vaishnava scholar from Gopiballabhpur. Srila Prabhupada was invited to speak by the Vrindavan scholar, Madhusudana Goswami, and went there with the blessings of Bhaktivinoda Thakur. Establishing the position he had been taught by Bhaktivinoda, Srila Prabhupada read an article entitled "Brahmins and Vaishnavas" and gave a discourse in which he completely destroyed the arguments of the materialistic karmi Smartas and established the proper conclusion of the scriptures. This article was subsequently published by the Gaudiya Printing Works as *Brāhmaṇa o Vaiṣṇava tārātamyā-ṣayaka siddhānta* ("Establishing the correct understanding of the relative positions of brahmins and Vaishnavas").

In the same year, another debate was held at Boro Akhra in Nabadwip town. This time, Srila Prabhupada established the eternality of the Gaura mantra on the basis of the *Atharva-veda's Caitanyupaniṣad* and other scriptural evidences.

In the first week of November, 1912, Srila Prabhupada took a small group of devotees on a tour of Sri Khanda, Jajigram, Katwa, Jhamatpur, Akai Hat, Chakhandi, Dai Hat and other places where Mahaprabhu's associates had had their homes. In every place he visited, he preached the teachings of pure devotional service.

In April of 1913, He established a publishing house named *Bhāgavata-yantrālaya* in Calcutta's Kalighat area. The first book printed was Chaitanya Charitamrita with his *Anubhāṣya* commentary. Others which followed were the Bhagavad Gita with Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur's *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary and the *mahā-kāvya Gaurakṣṇodaya* of the Orissan poet, Govinda Das. Prabhupada used to call the printing press the "Big Drum" (*bṛhat mṛdaṅga*). He was very enthusiastic about preaching through such publications because he saw it as a more stable and far-reaching method of spreading Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's pure devotional teachings. He made sure that he was always kept aware of everything that went on in the press.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur entered the eternal pastimes on June 23, 1914. Then in January of 1915, the press was moved to Vraja-pattana in Mayapur where more books continued to be printed. The *Anubhāṣya* commentary to the Chaitanya Charitamrita was completed at Vraja-pattana on June 14, 1915.

Srila Prabhupada took over the editorship of *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, the monthly magazine founded by Bhaktivinoda Thakur. The printing press was again moved to Krishnagar in July of 1915, and *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* and various books written by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur continued to be published from there.

At daybreak on Uthāna Ekādaśī, November 17, 1915, our parama gurudeva, Srila Gaura Kishor Das Goswami Maharaj, entered into his eternal pastimes from Koladvipa. As Babaji Maharaj's only initiated disciple, Srila Prabhupada performed his last rites according to the prescriptions of Gopal Bhatta Goswami's *Samśkāra-dīpikā*, establishing the samadhi of his guru in the Nutan Chora neighborhood of old Kuliya (the present-day town of Nabadwip). Some years later, when Babaji Maharaj's samadhi tomb was about to fall into the Ganges, Srila Prabhupada sent disciples to transfer his transcendental remains to the Chaitanya Math in their entirety. This was done on August 21, 1932. Prabhupada was personally present when the new samadhi temple was inaugurated next to his bhajan kutir on the banks of Sri Radha Kund in Sri Dham Mayapur and he initiated the regular service there.

Srila Prabhupada was overwhelmed by feelings of separation after the *aprakāṣa-līlās* (disappearance pastimes) of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and Paramahansa Babaji Maharaj in successive years, so much so that he was intent on giving up his own body. One night, towards dawn, he had a dream in which he saw all the members of the Pancha Tattva approaching the Yoga Pith temple from the east. They were being followed by Jagannath Das Babaji, Bhaktivinoda Thakur and Gaura Kishor Das Babaji, who all encouraged him profusely. They said, "Saraswati! Don't lose hope. Begin

your task of establishing pure religion. Preach Gaura's message and spread the service of His holy name, abode and mission everywhere. We are eternally present with you and always ready to help you. Countless people and unlimited wealth are waiting to help you in this mission."

When Prabhupada had received these blessings from Mahaprabhu and His eternal associates, he renewed his commitment to preaching activity: he began publishing even more books and spiritual magazines, traveling and establishing *mathas* and temples throughout India, consecrating deities for worship in these temples, and sending preachers from the Indian Ocean to the Himalayas and beyond to spread Mahaprabhu's message. His eternal companions began to come forth with their individual capacities to take shelter of his lotus feet and to help him in his preaching mission.

On March 7, 1918, on the auspicious occasion of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's appearance day, Srila Prabhupada took tridandi-sannyāsa in Sri Mayapur. On that same day, he consecrated the deities of Sri Sri Guru-Gaurāṅga and Sri Sri Gandharvika-Giridhārī at the house of Chandrasekhara Acharya and established Sri Chaitanya Math. Five years later, work began on the construction of a 29-spire temple at Chaitanya Math. The temple was conceived in such a way that images of the founders of the four sampradāyas, namely Sripad Ramanuja of the Sri sampradāya, Purnaprajna Madhva of the Brahma sampradāya, Sripad Vishnuswami of the Rudra sampradāya, and Nimbarka of the Sanaka sampradāya, were installed in shrines in each of its four corners. Though the four āchāryas of the theistic teachings of the Vedānta (*viṣṭādvaita*, *śuddha-dvāita*, *śuddhādvaita*, and *dvaitādvaita-siddhānta*, respectively) each had his place, the main temple was reserved for Sriman Mahaprabhu, the teacher of the essence of Vedānta, *acintya-bhedābheda-siddhānta*—the ultimate theistic doctrine as taught in the Srimad Bhagavatam. The main deity room also housed the deities of Sri Sri Rādhā-Govinda and Srila Prabhupada's Giridhārī deity, Vinodaprana.

Srila Prabhupada made the Chaitanya Math the headquarters from which he ran his worldwide mission. In November of the same year, 1918, he established a center in Calcutta at 1 Ultadangi Junction Road, which was named Sri Bhaktivinoda Asan. From there, he traveled to various towns in Jessore and Khulna districts. On February 5, 1919, Srila Prabhupada reestablished the World Vaishnava Association (Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha) at Bhaktivinoda Asan. On June 27, 1919, he consecrated a deity of Bhaktivinoda at Svananda-sukhada Kunja in Godrumadvipa. The first month-long sankirtan festival was held at Bhaktivinoda Asan from August 18 to September 18, 1919.

On June 23, 1920, exactly six years after the disappearance of Bhaktivinoda Thakur, Srila Prabhupada's worshipable mother followed him and entered the eternal abode.

On November 1, 1920, Srila Prabhupada initiated Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's disciple Srila Jagadish Bhakti-pradīpa, *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-bhūṣaṇa*, *Sampradāya-vaibhāvācārya*, B.A., into the renounced order of tridandi-sannyāsa. He was thus the first member of the order in the Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha and was known thenceforth as Tridandi Swami Bhakti Pradip Tirtha.

On March 14, 1921, Srila Prabhupada reestablished the annual parikrama or tour of Nabadwip Dhama. On August 19, 1922, the monthly magazine and heartbeat of the Gaudiya Math, the *Gaudīya*, was published for the first time from the Bhagavata Press. It is clear that Srila Prabhupada began his preaching work of spreading Mahaprabhu's message throughout the world after taking the tridandi-sannyāsa order in 1918. He himself vigorously gave learned lectures and speeches and arranged for books and periodicals in Bengali, English, Hindi, Sanskrit and Oriya to be published in great numbers. Temples and deity worship were established in many places both within and without India.

Srila Prabhupada ended his sojourn amongst the mortals of this world on Thursday 1, 1937, at 5:30 in

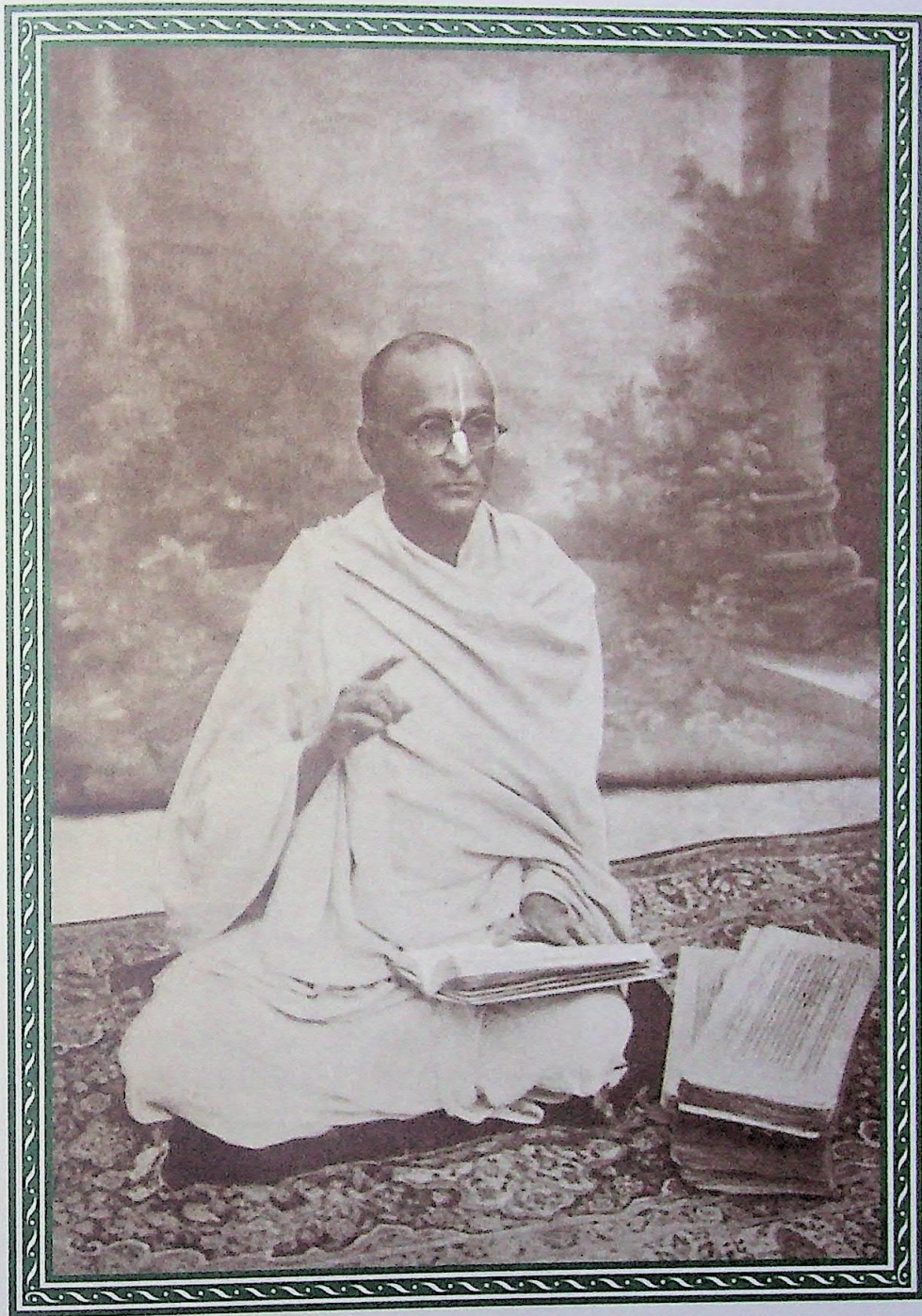


the morning, joining the service of Their Lordships
Radha and Govinda in Their early morning pastimes.

[First published in 1990, *Chaitanya Vāṇī* 30.2-3]

¹ Sarasvatī was one of the ten sannyasa titles given by Shankara. There are 108 names listed (including these ten) in the *Muktikopaniṣad* and *Satvata-saṁhitā* for Tridaṇḍi-sannyāsis. These are quoted in *Gauḍīya-kaṇṭha-hāra*, 15.40. The revised title can be interpreted as “the topmost authority on the devotional doctrines.”





"To receive the knowledge of the higher world, we have to completely surrender ourselves to a saint who has descended from that world, and hear from him."

The Built Temples of the Holy Name

The kind of blessing that gives rise (*udaya*) to evil (*manda*) is called *mandodayā dayā*; it cannot be considered a genuine blessing. Svarupa Damodar Goswami, on the other hand, described Mahaprabhu's mercy as *amandodayā*.

*heloddhūlita-khedayā viśadayā pramīlad-āmodayā
śamyac-chāstra-vivādayā rasadayā cittārpiteṇmādayā
śaśvad-bhakti-vinodayā samadayā mādhyama-maryādayā
śrī-caitanya dayānidhe tava dayā bhūyād amandodayā*

"O Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! O ocean of mercy! Let there be an awakening of Your auspicious mercy, which gives rise to all good fortune: It easily destroys all lamentation; it is pure and awakens transcendental bliss; it quiets all disagreements in the different scriptures; it intoxicates the soul with a taste of the transcendental mellows; it stimulates the joys of eternal devotional service, causing the recipient to lose external consciousness; it brings peace from all sensual desires, and demonstrates both the paths of spontaneous devotion and that of respect for the rules and regulations." (CC 2.10.119)

Our most revered Srila Prabhupada gave the following extended commentary on this verse in his *Anubhāṣya*:

"Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the most magnanimous Personality of Godhead, the personification of divine love, distributes His mercy in three ways to the pious souls. Every living entity is morose in the material world because he is always in want; he thus seeks to rid himself of his miseries through a multitude of means, but is never successful in this endeavor. The favor of the Lord is never attainable by one's own efforts. However, when the fragrance of the lotus feet

of the Lord expands in the living being's heart by the grace of the Lord, the distresses in the mind are cleansed just as dust is wiped from a mirror. At such a time, the heart is illuminated by the joy of the Lord's loving service.

"When one reads the various different scriptures, one often becomes confused by the conflicting arguments presented therein. As soon as one receives the mercy of the Lord, however, the heart becomes intoxicated with the wine of Krishna and this intoxication arising out of the Lord's mercy puts to rest all the confusion arising out of the dissenting views of various sectarian scriptures. An appreciation of the sweetness of devotion engages the conditioned soul in constant service to the Lord's lotus feet. At that point, the fortunate living entity takes pleasure in nothing but the divine love of Krishna. Krishna's mercy is thus spotless (*nirmalā*); it carries the taste of spiritual life (*rasadā*) and is filled with intoxicating jubilation (*sa-madā*).

"Thus, by the mercy of Lord Krishna the heart of the devotee is purified of the anguish born of material wants, which is a contamination. By the grace of the Lord, one gets a taste of spiritual life and transcends scriptural arguments, becoming firmly convinced of the Vaishnava philosophy. Not long thereafter, the mind becomes fully intoxicated with prema. As Krishna's mercy continues to descend, total indifference to sense enjoyment develops and, consumed by Krishna's sweetness, the jiva takes pleasure in devotion alone.

"So to resume: in the beginning, a conditioned soul is bereft of God consciousness and always morose from sense objects. In the next stage, the living being



seeks out the Supreme Lord. Finally, he becomes devoted to the Lord's service. The first stage of the Lord's mercy results in the devotee's misconceptions being vanquished and his heart being cleansed of all material dirt. It is only then that one begins to take pleasure in Krishna. In the next stage of the Lord's mercy, one understands the truth of the devotional philosophy (*bhakti-siddhānta*). This means that he gets a taste for the Lord's service with the result that he becomes intoxicated with divine love. When the devotee attains the highest stage of divine sweetness by the mercy of the Lord, he or she becomes so attached to the His devotional service and begins to see the Lord's activities everywhere and at all times. By Krishna's mercy, the jiva's thirst for sense pleasures is extinguished; in other words, he is liberated. But this means that he has no interest for anything other than the activities of devotional service, of which the primary is chanting the names and glories of the Lord. This is the final stage of devotion.

"Even though a devotee may have had a desire for liberation, after taking this medicine for the material disease, he gives up any such desire and experiences the connection with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Though such a devotee may be materially absorbed, by the might of Krishna's mercy he can still put an end to his involvement in sense gratification and be fixed in pure devotion through the constant glorification of the Lord's virtues, which are so pleasing to the ear. Thus, everyone is advised to take exclusive shelter of the Lord's mercy."

Mahaprabhu had no patience with statements that opposed Vaishnava orthodoxy (*bhakti-siddhānta-viruddha*) or were confused in their portrayal of divine sentiment (*rasābhāsa*). For this reason, Svarupa Damodar Goswami was called upon to inspect any books, songs or verses to ascertain whether they would bring the Lord pleasure or not. In these matters, Svarupa Damodar was considered to be the Lord's second self and perfectly knowledgeable in the transcendental mellows.

Srila Prabhupada, as the perfect follower of Svarupa

Damodar and Rupa Goswami, was similarly the personification of the orthodox Vaishnava doctrine (*śuddha-bhakti-siddhānta-vānī*). He never compromised Mahaprabhu's teachings out of considerations for public opinion. Prabhupada would quote Chaitanya Charitamrita (3.3.23): *nirapekṣa nahile dharma nā jāya rakṣaṇa*—"No one can preserve their principles without being aloof from the opinions of the world." Those who try to preserve the principles of religion while simultaneously trying to maintain popularity with the worldly will have to show their approval for so many conflicting doctrines that the purity of the true religion will be lost. Rather than serving that pure spiritual religion, they become servants of public opinion instead. Though they may receive applause from the people at large, they cannot do them any real good.

The sad truth is that no one can please everybody. Instead of trying to do so, we should think that we can serve everyone by serving the Supreme Lord (*sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā*), just as by watering the root of a tree we can provide for its trunks and branches, or by feeding the stomach we can nourish the entire body. The principle is that by satisfying the Lord the entire universe is satisfied—*tasmims tuṣṭe jagat tuṣṭam*. Therefore we should make our primary efforts for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord.

Our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada, the best of the followers of Srila Rupa Goswami, would always quote the following verse from the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

"The highest category of devotion or bhakti is defined as the culture of a favorable attitude to Krishna, devoid of all material desires and without any adulteration by monistic philosophy or fruitive action."
(BRS 1.1.11, CC 2.19.167)

In other words, to engage in pure devotion, we must



give up all activities that go against the principles of service to the Lord, including illicit sexual activity or indeed any kind of unethical conduct. Such devotional service must be unblemished by desires for sense gratification or personal salvation and must be characterized by the direct effort to please the senses of the Lord. This verse is the guiding thread of bhakti theology; it shows that bhakti is independent of the paths of knowledge, works and yoga, all of which are permeated with selfish desire. Prabhupada followed this thread and dedicated himself to preaching this exclusive devotion by which all illusory fulfillments are eradicated.

Krishna Das Kaviraja, who was also committed to the teachings of Rupa Goswami, quoted the above verse in his Chaitanya Charitamrita:

*śuddha-bhakti haite haya premā utpanna
ataeva śuddha-bhaktira kahiye lakṣaṇa*

“Ecstatic love for Krishna arises out of the pure practice of devotion. Therefore, I shall describe the characteristics of pure devotion.”

*anya-vāñchā anya-pūjā chāri jñāna karma
ānukūlye sarvendriye kṛṣṇānuśīlana
ei śuddha-bhakti ihā haite premā haya
pañcarātre bhāgavate ei lakṣaṇa kaya*

“To favorably culture Krishna consciousness with all of one’s senses, abandoning all other desires, the worship of other gods and efforts to attain the supreme through the intellect or through works: this is the definition of pure devotional service from which ecstatic love is developed. The characteristics of such love are described in literatures like the Bhagavata and Pancharatra.” (CC 2.19.168-9)

Krishna Das then goes on to quote the Nārada-pañcarātra:

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ
tat-paratvena nirmalam
hrīṣīkeṇa hrīṣīkeṣa-
sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

“The Pancharatra specifically defines devotional service as the engagement of the senses in the service of the Proprietor of the Senses. It adds that this service is to be free from any bodily or mental identification and unblemished through being exclusively fixed on the Lord.” (BRS 1.1.12; CC 2.19.170)

The Srimad Bhagavatam also discusses the characteristics of causeless devotional service in the following way:

*ahaituky avyavahitā
yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame
śālokya-sārṣṭi-sāmīpya-
sārūpyaikatvam apy uta*

*diyamānaṁ na grhṇanti
vinā mat-sevanam janāḥ
sa eva bhakti-yogākhyā
ātyantika udāhṛtaḥ*

“Devotion to the Supreme Person is uninterrupted and unmotivated. Unless he is assured of having service to the Lord, a pure devotee does not accept any kind of liberation, whether it be residence on the same planet, equal opulence to the Lord, proximity to Him, having the same form as the Lord, or monistic union—even though the Lord may offer him them. Thus have I described the superlative stage of bhakti yoga.” (SB 3.29.11-13)

In his *Durgama-saṅgamanī-ṭikā*, Śrīla Jiva Goswami comments on the word *ahaituki* (“unmotivated”) in these verses by referring to the above-quoted verse from the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. He specifies that the unmotivated nature of bhakti is exemplified in the subsequent verse wherein a devotee is shown to desire none of the various types of liberation which are without service to the Lord. The “superlative stage” (*ātyantikah*) of devotion means that this is the ultimate goal of human life.

Śrīla Prabhupada often spoke of the inner identity of the two aspects of devotion known as the Bhagavata and the Pancharatra paths. The Pancharatra path



refers specifically to the worship of deities, the construction of temples and other related activities that cannot be carried out uninterruptedly. This is not true of the Bhagavata path consisting of hearing, chanting and remembering the Lord's names, forms and activities. However, Prabhupada showed how the two were harmonious on the transcendental plane. He never promoted the building of temples and monasteries for the simple purpose of having opulent deity worship for beginners in devotional service, the *kaniṣṭha adhikārīs*. Rather, he saw them as an institution for the worship of the Holy Name, in accordance with the various scriptural statements defining sankirtan as the uniting of many people in the chanting of the Lord's glories (*bahubhir militvā yat kīrtanam tad eva saṅkīrtanam*), for the congregational chanting of the Lord's names is the supreme religious activity of the age—*param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*—and has the power to clear the mind of all impurities, *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*. For Prabhupada, the first verse of Mahaprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭakam* described the seven flames of the divine sacrifice of the Holy Name. He saw the value of constructing *maṭhas* and *mandiras* to the extent in which they facilitated the performance of this sacrifice, otherwise, a temple without the "deity" of the Holy Name was really empty and without any opulence whatsoever. Prabhupada would say, "We didn't come into this world to become bricklayers or carpenters; we are simply peons carrying the message of Lord Chaitanya."

Thus, though Srila Prabhupada established monasteries, built temples, instituted the practice of deity worship and festivals, their underlying purpose was the preaching of Bhagavata Dharma. This was the way in which he harmonized the Pancharatra and Bhagavata paths of devotion.

The first steps that Srila Prabhupada took to establish Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's mission was to open a printing press in Calcutta called the Bhagavata Press and begin publishing books on pure devotion. Up to that point he had not opened temples or established deity worship anywhere. He had learned from Bhaktivinoda Thakur to engage in the service of the *śrauta-vānī*, that is, the

Divine Word or Logos emanating from the disciplic succession. Srila Prabhupada called the printing press the "big drum" (*bṛhat mṛdaṅga*). However, the sound of the clay mridanga only carries a short distance, whereas the reach of the printing press has no limit; thus, the worship of Krishna's sankirtan so dear to Mahaprabhu can be more perfectly carried out.

In 1885, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur established the Vaishnava Depository in his Calcutta home, Bhakti Bhavan, for the purpose of disseminating bhakti literature. Srila Prabhupada gained experience in printing and publishing in those days. He was engaged in proofreading and later writing articles for *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, the monthly magazine edited by his father Bhaktivinoda Thakur. In the same year, the Thakur reinitiated the Visva Vaishnava Sabha ("World Vaishnava Association") in South Calcutta. The eleven-year-old Bimala Prasad participated in the weekly meetings, carrying the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* from which Bhaktivinoda Thakur would lecture into the hall. He would then sit down and listen to him attentively. Even at this age, the young Srila Prabhupada regularly read and recited Narottama Das Thakur's poems from *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*. He also loved the king of all literature, the Srimad Bhagavatam. I also mentioned in a previous chapter that Bhaktivinoda Thakur brought Srila Prabhupada a rosary of tulasi beads when he was only seven years old, initiating him in the Maha Mantra and the Nrsingha mantra. His father would also read to him from his book, *Chaitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, while he was still writing it.

In 1881, when the foundation of Bhakti Bhavan was being dug, a *Śalagrāma-śilā* of Kurma was found. Bhaktivinoda Thakur gave this deity to Srila Prabhupada to worship and from that time, he regularly observed Vaishnava practices such as wearing tilak and faithfully chanting the Kurma mantra. Bhaktivinoda Thakur gave the eight-year-old boy detailed instructions in how to worship the deity.

In 1885, Srila Prabhupada accompanied his father on a tour of various places associated with Mahaprabhu's



pastimes and companions, such as Kulinagram and Saptagram. Srila Prabhupada's life is thus a perfect example of Prahlad Maharaj's instruction in the Bhagavata for everyone to start practicing the Bhagavata Dharma in childhood.

*kaumāram ācāret prājño
dharmān bhāgavatān iha
durlabham mānuṣaṁ janmaa
tad apy adhruvam arthadam*

"The perceptive individual will take up the practices of the Bhagavata religion from his very childhood. This human form of life is extremely rare, and though it can result in the ultimate good, such a destiny is uncertain." (SB 7.6.1)

Prahlad was only a young boy when he spoke this verse. He did not approve the natural playfulness of the children who were in school with him, but rather than telling them to get involved in the varnashram system, he instructed them in hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord, in other words, the practices of the Bhagavata Dharma. Prahlad showed compassion to them in this way and we see that, like him, our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada also practiced and compassionately taught the Bhagavata religion from his own childhood.

Among the twenty-four gurus the *avadhūta* brahmin Dattatreya described to Maharaj Yadu, one was his own material body. The teaching that he received from his body included the two following verses:

*sṛṣṭvā purāṇi vividhāny ajayātma-śaktyā
vrkṣān sarīṣṭpa-paśūn khaga-dandaśūkān
tais tair atuṣṭa-hṛdayaḥ puruṣaṁ vidhāya
brahmāvaloka-dhiṣaṇaṁ mudam āpa devaḥ*

"With the help of His Maya potency, the Supreme Lord created this visible world with its trees, serpents, animals, birds and other creatures, but His heart remained dissatisfied. Then He created man, who alone possesses the intelligence to see Brahman, and was delighted." (SB 11.9.28)

*labdhvā sudurlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam arthadam anityam apīha dhīrah
tūrnām yateta na pated anumṛtyu yāvat
niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt*

"After many, many births, one is finally born in a most rare and valuable human body. Although it may be temporary, it provides an opportunity to attain the supreme goal. Therefore, the wise individual should immediately take up the effort to find that which provides the supreme good in all times and circumstances, and not give it up right to the moment of death." (SB 11.9.29)

The most compassionate Srila Prabhupada often quoted this second verse to stress the rarity of human life and the necessity of engaging in the worship of the Lord without delay. In his comments on these verses, he wrote, "The conditioned soul is subject to repeated rebirths in which he may sometimes become a god, sometimes a human, or even an animal, a tree or some other immovable entity. These various external sheaths give the being differing identities according to which they engage in sense gratification and other activities appropriate to that species. The specificity of the human form of life, however, is that it allows one to learn about and experience the truth. It is thus an extremely important stop on the soul's voyage from species to species, for elsewhere such experience and understanding of the truth about reality are beyond reach.

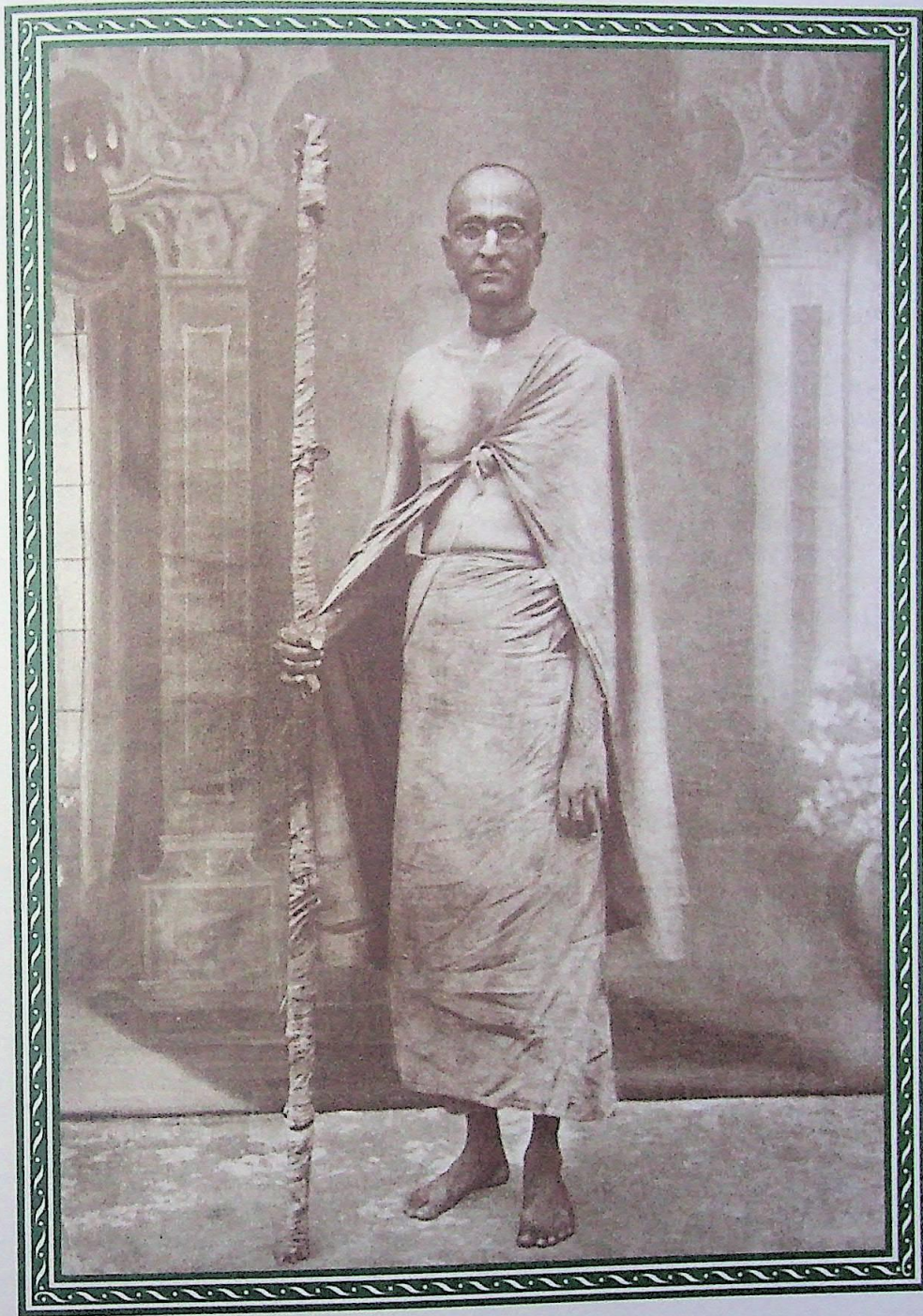
"At the same time, the human body is not everlasting. The embodied soul that resides within that body has an extraordinary opportunity to achieve something of ultimate value. While in this body, he can consider what is the supreme good for himself. Before death strikes him down, it is imperative that he learn what that supreme good is. He must distance himself from all the apparent benefits related to the impermanent body and seek the joy that comes from his eternal duty of service to the supreme truth. This is most important for one who wishes to achieve that which is of eternal benefit to him. Those who have use of their intelligence should think this matter over.



“The human being’s use of time should be directed to the most important things, namely the service of the Supreme Lord. We can establish our ultimate good by following those who are committed to serving the Lord and do not waste their time in the trivial pursuit of flickering sense pleasures. The human being’s only duty is understanding what is his ultimate good; when assessing which of our duties are more or less important, we should place this priority at the top of the list. Bhakti, the true end of repeated births and deaths, arises through association with devotees. Without bhakti, the living being is so afflicted by the three kinds of material suffering that he either becomes a mayavadi out of the desire for personal salvation or a fruitive worker out of a desire for sense gratification.”

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Srila Prabhupada accepted the Tridandi-sannyas order in 1918.

How He Worshiped the Holy Name

Sur most worshipable Srila Prabhupada displayed an extraordinary attachment for the chanting of the Holy Name from his very childhood. He had such spontaneous enthusiasm both for chanting and deity worship that his father, mother and other relatives were astonished. He constantly read from the songbooks of Narottama Das Thakur.

Srila Prabhupada started preaching Mahaprabhu's gospel in 1905 after coming to Mayapur and settling there. You have also read previously that he followed Namacharya Hari Das Thakur's example and began chanting three lakhs of Holy Names every day without fail with the object of chanting a hundred crores (one billion).

During the time he was present on this earth, our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada wrote many letters to his disciples. In most of these, he gave instructions about the chanting of the Holy Names—*Nāma-bhājana*. A number of these letters were collected and published in three volumes as *Srila Prabhupādera Patrāvalī*. We have collected some of Prabhupada's instructions on chanting from all these handwritten letters. Srila Prabhupada mercifully wrote, "The Holy Name alone is our life and soul." Mahaprabhu stated that the nine principal types of devotional activities quickly give rise to prema, but among them, the chanting of the Holy Name is the most powerful. The proviso to avoid committing offenses to the Name is of course there. Prabhupada would often remind us that the Name quickly bears fruit if we chant humbly, being tolerant of the vicissitudes that face us in life, without desiring any honor for ourselves and always being prepared to honor all others.

Our most merciful Srila Prabhupada wrote, "Any liv-

ing being who does not worship Krishna inevitably becomes a mundane philosopher, a fruitive worker or a materialist. This is why we must always call out to the Lord by chanting the Maha Mantra. By loudly chanting a fixed number of Names every single day, the contaminations gradually diminish; the dullness of material consciousness flees. Even those who are inimical to the worship of the Lord will desist from mocking devotees who chant in this way. Offenseless chanting brings all perfections into the reach of the devotee. Materialistic people can do nothing to such a chanter." (Vol. I, pp. 1-2)

"All auspiciousness comes from the regular chanting of a fixed number of Holy Names. It gives me great joy to know that you have understood this. Do not let up simply because various mundane thoughts disturb you while you are chanting the Holy Name. Such useless thoughts will gradually disappear as a result of chanting, so don't become agitated on account of them. You cannot get the results of chanting prematurely. When you have a great deal of attraction for the Holy Name, the allure of mundane thoughts will diminish. If we do not have great enthusiasm for chanting, how will we ever get rid of such thoughts? ... If we serve the Holy Name with our bodies, minds and souls, then the Named will reveal His all-auspicious form to us." (Vol. I, p. 3)

"I am overjoyed to hear that your enthusiasm for chanting is increasing. As our contaminations are removed by the chanting, the Lord's form, qualities and pastimes will be revealed to us in the Holy Name. There is no point in making a separate effort to artificially remember the Lord's form, qualities and pastimes. The Lord and His name are one and the same. This will be understood clearly when the



coverings in our hearts are removed. By chanting without offenses you will personally realize that all perfections come from the Holy Name. Through chanting, the distinction that exists between the self and the gross and subtle bodies is gradually effaced and one realizes one's own spiritual form. Once aware of the spiritual body, as one continues to chant, one sees the transcendental nature of the Lord's form. Only the Holy Name reveals the spiritual form of the living being and then causes him to be attracted to Krishna's form. Only the Holy Name reveals the spiritual qualities of the living being and then causes him to be attracted to Krishna's qualities. Only the Holy Name reveals the spiritual activities of the living being and then causes him to be attracted to Krishna's pastimes. By service to the Holy Name we do not only mean the chanting of the Holy Name; it also includes the other duties of the chanter. If we serve the Holy Name in body, mind and soul, then the direction of that service spontaneously manifests like the sun in the clear sky of the chanter's heart. What is the nature of the Holy Name? Eventually all these understandings spontaneously appear in the heart of one who chants the Holy Name. The true nature of Harinam is revealed through listening to, reading, and studying the scriptures. It is unnecessary to write anything further on this subject. All these things will be revealed to you through chanting." (Vol. I, pp. 4-5)

"If you wish to give up offenses while chanting, then just go on chanting constantly and the offenses will stop. Sriman Mahaprabhu gave all His powers to Rupa Goswami. So pray to Sri Rupa and his followers and beg them to bestow Mahaprabhu's mercy upon you. You should especially pray to the personified Name to make you worthy of serving Him. Through the Lord's name, the Lord of the Name (*Nāma-prabhu*) will take up residence in your heart." (Vol. I, p. 6)

"The Lord does not accept any offering given by someone who does not chant a lakh of Holy Names every single day." (Vol. I, p. 9)

"Continue to increase my eternal ecstasy by taking

the Name offenselessly." (Vol. I, p. 10)

"The service of Krishna, His devotees and the chanting of His holy names; though these three activities are distinct, they all have the same meaning. Through the congregational chanting of the Lord's names, one renders service to Krishna and to His devotees. Similarly, by serving the Vaishnavas, we also render service to Krishna and to His name. And by serving Krishna, we also engage in chanting the Holy Names and serving the Vaishnavas. The evidence is in the verse *sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śābhitam*—'The state of pure goodness is named *vasudeva*' (SB 4.3.23). When we read Chaitanya Charitamrita, we are engaging in service to Krishna and at the same time are engaged in chanting the Holy Name. The same result also comes of reading the Bhagavata in the association of devotees. Even in the performance of deity worship, the three most important activities are taking place, what to speak of when engaged in *Nāma-bhajana*." (Vol. I, p. 19)

"Of all the means of avoiding the association of the unholy, the best is to increase the amount of japa that you are doing; so take care to do this. If you chant a lakh every single day, then offenders to the Holy Name will not be able to create a disruption in your spiritual life. Make sure that you set aside the time needed to chant a lakh of Names every day." (Vol. I, p. 53)

"The Lord and His name are one and the same entity. For those who continue to make the distinction between the Lord and His name, it is absolutely necessary to associate with and serve those devotees who are expert in bhajan, for only in this way will the contaminations be removed from their hearts... When one becomes expert in bhajan, then it is his obligation to do good for others... Bhajan is not something that is done for show; it is not a public matter. If we chant the Holy Names loudly, then the temptation of sloth will not be able to swallow us up." (Vol. I, pp. 61-62)

"Make an effort to increase the number of rounds you chant until you reach 64. If you subsequently



decrease your number below that, you are considered 'fallen'. So take care to chant without fail." (Vol. I, p. 68)

"Remain in this place and chant the Holy Name in a regular fashion. Read the Chaitanya Bhagavata and the Chaitanya Charitamrita... Mahaprabhu is particularly merciful to those who are humble in mind and who consider themselves incapable... I pray to Mahaprabhu that your enthusiasm for serving the Lord should increase and that you become recognized in society. May He make you truly superior human beings and keep you fixed in bhajan... I will be happy when I learn that you are chanting the Holy Name without any disturbance, by the mercy of the Lord." (Vol. II, pp. 1-2)

"The Lord and His name are one and the same entity. Chanting the Holy Name and having a direct vision of the Supreme Lord may appear to be two different things, but in actuality they are one. Liberated souls consider the Holy Name to be their object of worship. Study holy literatures like Chaitanya Bhagavata, Chaitanya Charitamrita, Narottama's *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, and Bhaktivinoda's *Kalyāṇa-kalpa-taru*. You should know that the true fruit of meditation and deity worship is the chanting of Krishna's name." (Vol. II, p. 3)

"Chant the Holy Names in seclusion, keeping a fixed number of rounds every single day, and avoiding offenses. If you chant the Holy Name with an awareness of the *sambandhas*, then no materialistic person can do you any evil. The living being who does not engage in *Nāma-bhajana* will find no other path to auspiciousness. The Holy Name is the Lord Himself. We cannot look upon the Lord's name or the Lord Himself with mundane eyes; if we do, we naturally consider them to be distinct from each other. Those who are liberated have no doubts that the Name is the Lord Himself." (Vol. II, p. 5)

"All auspiciousness comes to the living being as he chants. The Lord in the form of His name is not different from the Lord of the Name. Study the Chaitanya

Charitamrita closely... Narottama Das Thakur has written, 'I have died without worshiping Gaura. I have spent my life in striving for things without any value and made no effort to attain the truly valuable.' Chant the Holy Name and pray in the way that Narottama did. No distress born of contact with the sense objects will be able to touch you." (Vol. II, p. 7)

"Even if you have little taste for it, if you continue to chant the Holy Names with respect, then you will be able to learn that both Mahaprabhu and Krishna are not different from Their names. Before everything else, worship the spiritual master, then Gaura and then Krishna... Chant the Holy Names according to a fixed number. Gaura Hari and Radha-Krishna are the same entity; one should not make any distinction between Them. Gaura is Krishna. As you get to know Them, as you realize this, you will receive Their blessings... Nothing can compare with the mercy of Lord Gaurasundara. There is no limit to the sweetness of Lord Krishnachandra." (Vol. II, p. 9)

"Do not be preoccupied with the end result of chanting. Rather, chant Krishna's name constantly with patience and forbearance. The Lord will surely not sit silently and do nothing. Gaura Hari will certainly reward every practitioner according to the nature of his practice. Service to the Lord is called bhakti. You can also know that uttering the name of the Lord is devotion... As you run your hands over the japa mala, think that you are touching Lord Gaurasundara's lotus feet. That is the way you should chant." (Vol. II, p. 10)

"Read the Chaitanya Charitamrita with understanding and chant the Holy Name without offenses." (Vol. II, p. 12)

"The living entities who render service to Hari, the guru and the Vaishnavas will be released from repeated birth and death; those who do not will be swallowed up by material life. Chant the Holy Name with faith constantly. Study the *Upadeśāmṛta* and Chaitanya Charitamrita and try to understand their deep inner meaning. The Lord is supremely merci-



ful; one day or another, He will surely give you His blessings." (Vol. II, p. 14)

"Chant the Holy Name without interruption. Read devotional literature offenselessly. May people feel pleased at seeing your exemplary life... We will not stop serving Krishna because [a certain devotee] has fallen into the hands of wicked people... I hope that you are able to pass the tests given you by the wicked and continue to chant the Names fearlessly. Even if you do not have firm faith, continue chanting constantly with great care." (Vol. II, pp. 15-16)

"Pray to the Holy Name as you chant; then the Holy Name will bless you." (Vol. II, p. 17)

"In mind, reject all bad association and chant the Holy Name without offense. Study the Chaitanya Charitamrita always." (Vol. II, p. 18)

"If you chant the Holy Name without offenses, then you can be sure that all your entanglement in material sense gratification and fruitive activities from previous lives has all come to an end. One can only begin chanting as a result of initiation. You are a servant of God who is free from the results of past karma. So what is the need of superfluous material works after being initiated? Have you not chanted the Holy Name at least once? So why are you once again starting up fruitive rituals in order to destroy previously accumulated karma like a beginner in spiritual life? As long as a living being is bewildered, he will engage in such fruitive activities because he thinks he is in need; he wants to be rich so that he can engage in sense gratification, for that is what such activities lead to. The devotees of Krishna are liberated and their only duty is chanting the Holy Name." (Vol. II, pp. 20-21)

"Serve the Holy Name with a special faith; then everything will be successful. Bless us that we may be able to chant the Name free from offenses." (Vol. II, p. 24)

"Always be detached and chant the Holy Names with-

out offenses. Always study holy literatures like Chaitanya Bhagavata, Chaitanya Charitamrita, Prārthanā and Prema-bhakti-candrikā, and Kalyāṇa-kalpa-taru. If you do so, all auspiciousness will come." (Vol. II, p. 25)

"If you chant Krishna's name, all bad association will disappear like the morning mist. Bad association means the mayavadis and fruitive workers, those who believe that they can achieve liberation through the power of intellect and those who have multifarious desires. It seems that with every passing day, more and more mayavadis are identifying themselves as Vaishnavas. It used to be thought that only the immoral and the foolish lower classes would claim to be Vaishnavas, but now it seems that every last mayavadi boasts of being one. If we follow the order of Svarupa Damodar Goswami, we will drive these mayavadis away and chant Harinam free from such bad association. Then Gaura Hari will give us His blessings." (Vol. II, p. 27)

"Stay at home and chant always. That way, all auspiciousness will come to you." (Vol. II, p. 28)

"All householders should faithfully serve the deity form of the Lord. Those householders who have a steady awareness of sambandha-jñāna and take exclusive shelter of the Holy Name must also show respect for others who are engaged in deity worship. Any householder who does not engage in deity worship in order to save money is a miser. Deity worship is particularly recommended for those householders whose discipline is weak and whose minds are distracted and disturbed." (Vol. II, 32)

"We will engage in service to the Holy Dham of Mayapur by announcing the marketplace of the Holy Name, and not by chanting in seclusion. Do not disrupt the service of Mayapur by selfishly engaging in nirjana-bhajana." (Vol. II, 51)

"Remember Bhaktivinoda Thakur's words, 'I cannot find the strength in myself alone' (ekākī āmāya nāhi pāi bala) and work cooperatively to complete the sacrifice to the Holy Name in the way that I desire.



How He Worshiped the Holy Name

Those who have responsibility for the performance of this sacrifice must cultivate the virtue of making friendship with everyone, that is, of winning the hearts and minds of all the Vaishnavas and engaging them in the service of the Lord." (Vol. II, 53)

"By Lord Jagannath's kindness, we are well. I have been given a great opportunity to chant constantly. Please come as quickly as possible to Purushottam Math in Puri Dham and become free of the troubles of householder life." (Vol. II, 64)

"I hope that you are finding joy in the worship of the Holy Name. Ordinarily, the rules of etiquette call on one to begin a letter, as other tasks, with words of glorification (*jaya*) or obeisance (*namah*) to the Lord. It is not correct to write the Maha Mantra, which is in the vocative case, at the head of a letter. If you do this, it then appears that you are proudly putting yourself in the position of the reader's spiritual master or instructor. Nor do I approve of the Prakrita Sahajiyas' habit of writing *Rādhe Rādhe*, thus giving respect to the Vaishnavas as though they were the Lord in His form as the supreme reservoir of devotion, nor of those who invent catchy new rhymes to replace the traditional mantras." (Vol. II, 72)

"Where there is Hari-kathā (discussions of Lord Hari), such a place is holy—a tirtha. On the other hand, a place of pilgrimage where the Holy Names are not sung may be an amusing site to take a holiday, but is not useful in advancing in one's service... In the penury of talk about Krishna, we come to think that material sense gratification is the most relishable thing, and so we desire it. Rupa Goswami wrote:

*syāt kṛṣṇa-nāma-caritādi-sitāpy avidyā-
pittopatapta-rasanasya na rocikā nu
kintv ādarād anudinaṁ khalu saiva juṣṭo
svādvī kramād bhavati tad-gada-mūla-hantrī*

'Krishna's name and pastimes may well be sweet to the taste, but our tongues are filled with the bile of ignorance and so they do not seem desirable to us. If we diligently engage ourselves in serving them respectfull-

ly, day in and day out, then gradually they will become sweet to the taste, for they will cure the disease of ignorance at its foundations.' (Upadeśāmṛta 7)

"We take pleasure in sense objects, but the most perfect objects of the senses are the Lord's glorious lotus feet. We have forgotten this beauty and are ready to serve almost anything except Krishna. This search for objects other than Krishna is the root of our disease. As long as we have this disease, even the faintest contact with the Lord's name, form, qualities, associates or pastimes provokes a negative reaction: we feel them to be bitter and unpleasant. But just as a jaundiced person is prescribed sugar candy to help cure him of his disease, the names and pastimes of the Lord are the cure for the disease of indifference to Him. Then the sweetness of Krishna's name will manifest itself and will engage our spiritual senses in the service of the supreme object of divine love. Please bless me that one day I may give up my attachment to the sense objects and dwell in Vrindavan—*viṣaya cāṛiyā āmi kabe jāba vṛndāvana?*

"What songs shall we sing? This one by Bhaktivinoda Thakur is particularly suitable:

*jivana samāpta-kāle kariba bhajana
ebe kari gr̥ha-sukha
kakhano e-kathā nāhi bale vijña-jana
e-deha patanonmukha*

*āji vā śateka varṣe avaśya maraṇa
niścinta nā thāka bhāi
jata śighra pāro bhajo śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa
jīvanera thik nāi*

*saṁsāra nirvāha kari jāba āmi vṛndāvana
ṛṇa-traya śodhibāre karitechi sujatana*

*e āśāya nāhi prayojana
emana durāśā-vaṣe jābe prāṇa avaṣeṣe
nā haibe dīna-bandhu-caraṇa-sevana
jadi sumāṅgala cāo sadā kṛṣṇa-nāma gāo
gr̥he thāko vane thāko ithe tarka akāraṇa*

"A wise person never says, 'I shall chant the Holy



Names at the end of my life; at present, let me enjoy my life as a householder.' He knows that the body is always on the brink of death.

"Death will come, brother, whether today or in a hundred years, so do not be apathetic. Worship Krishna as soon as you can, for life is not a certainty.

"There is no need to hope that you can go and live in Vrindavan while maintaining your household life and taking care to repay the three debts (to the saints, gods, and ancestors). If you keep trying to play both sides of the fence, then death will come and you will not have served the feet of the Lord, the friend of the destitute.

"If you want your ultimate good, then always sing the names of Krishna. It is not necessary to argue about whether you should remain in the home or renounce it." (*Kalyāṇa-kalpa-taru, Sambandhābhidheya-prayojana*, 4)

What else should we sing?

*cañcala jīvana srotaḥ pravāhiyā
kālera sāgare dhāya
gela je divasa nā āsibe āra
ebe kṛṣṇa ki upāya*

*tumi patita-janera bandhu
jānihe tomāra nātha
tumi to karuṇājāla-sindhu*

*āmi bhāgya-hīna ati arvācīna
nā jāni bhakati-leśa
nija-guṇe nātha kara ātmasāt
ghucāiyā bhava-kleśa*

*siddha-deha diyā vṛndāvana mājhe
sevāmṛta kara dāna
piyāiyā prema matta kari more
śuna nija-guṇa-gāna*

*yugala-sevāya śrī-rāsa-maṇḍale
niyuktaa kara āmāya
lalitā sakhīra ayogyā kiṅkarī
vinoda dhariche pāya*

"This flickering life is like a stream that flows into the ocean of time. Once a day has gone, it will never come back; so, Krishna, what should I do now?

"You are the friend of the fallen; I recognize You as my Lord, for You are the ocean of compassion.

"I am most unfortunate and lacking in wisdom. I haven't got the slightest bit of devotion. O Lord, claim me as Your own out of the goodness of Your heart. Deliver me from the miseries of material life.

"Give me my spiritual body in the midst of Vrindavan, bestowing the nectar of service upon me. Give me the nectar of love and intoxicate me. Listen to me as I sing Your glories.

"Engage me in the service of the Divine Couple in the Rasa mandala. Bhaktivinoda, the most unworthy servant of Lalita Sakhi, holds tight to Your lotus feet." (Vol. II, 82-85)

"We beg everyone for their blessings that, in the spirit of Gaurasundara's teaching to be more humble than the straw, more tolerant than the tree, respectful to all and asking no respect for ourselves, we may follow His method of chanting the Holy Names. We also pray that we may hold the shoes of those who chant in this way on our foreheads out of respect, and so be empowered to purify the world of all the distasteful refuse of temporary and useless things that have been foisted on it by the sense enjoyers, the karmis, jnanis and others who lack discrimination, who torture our eyes and render useless our ability to see." (Vol. II, p. 87-88)

"The *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* about which you have heard from the Vaishnavas in Vrindavan should be highly regarded, no doubt. But the way in which these pastimes are conceived of in the contaminated state is totally corrupt. Some fortunate individuals are capable of knowing these things after chanting for a long time, for that is the identity of the true self. But it can only be known after one is freed of mental contaminations. With the awakening of this spiritual identity,



one automatically has constant cognition of his spiritual form. Those who say that they can teach or reveal this identity are practicing a kind of deception; it cannot be done. On the other hand, if a devotee receives some inspiration after sincerely chanting for a long time, he should go to the *sad-guru* or advanced devotees and ask for it to be confirmed and purified by them. The spiritual identity has eleven aspects [*ekādaśa-bhāva*]. There are many cases of unscrupulous gurus who artificially force-feed these designations on unqualified practitioners, but we cannot call this the mark of spiritual perfection. Those who have achieved the perfection of being fixed in their spiritual identity (*svarūpa-siddhi*) have attained such a realization through internal revelation and the spiritual master's only involvement in these matters is to help the further advancement of the disciple... As a practitioner progresses toward spiritual perfection, all these things are revealed naturally within the heart that sincerely seeks service." (Vol. II, pp. 89-90)

"No one should reduce his service to the Lord, even unto his last breath... The only real necessity in this human form of life, which can produce the only true value, is Hari kirtan. Leading a life of lethargy in the name of worshiping in solitude is one type of deception; meaningless poverty in the name of renunciation is another. These are unnecessary as they obstruct Hari kirtan. Hold off living in a secluded cottage for many lifetimes, for your mind will lead you to engage in subtle or hidden sense gratification. I advise you to rather begin by engaging your every act in the service of Krishna. We should adopt the kind of renunciation taught in Narottama's *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*; in other words, one that is not just for show. Narottama prays:

*ṣaḍ-rasa-bhojana dūre parihari
kabe vraja māgiyā khāiba madhukarī*

"When will I completely renounce enjoying the six kinds of taste (*ṣaḍ-rasa*) and simply live on begged food in Vraja?" (*Prārthanā*)

"With this mental attitude, we should attempt to

spread the glories of the spiritual master and Mahāprabhu, and in this way, we will win Mahāprabhu's blessings and be able to truly worship the Lord's name. With this attitude, it is possible to even ride through North Gopālapuram in the Madras Gaudiya Math's limousine dressed as a sannyasi without being an imposter or a hypocrite. There is no need to follow the example of Kuliya's [name withheld], who falsely dresses as a babaji and makes a show of renunciation while engaging in sense gratification. Renunciation is a matter of the heart. There is a big difference between those who misuse the trappings of renunciation and those who follow in the footsteps of King Janaka or Ramananda Raya. But internal renunciation, or balanced renunciation (*yukta-vairāgya*), does not mean becoming a Ravana while externally imitating King Janaka or Ramananda Raya or misusing their example. You may make an artificial show of renunciation in this way, but never expect it to produce any positive results." (Vol. II, pp. 100-101)

"Every one of the senses is engaged in protecting the body as a whole, and if they are reluctant to do so, the entire body is to some extent adversely affected. In the same way, every individual must serve the society as a whole, otherwise it will experience some degree of loss. In view of this, all those who seek the good of human society have a duty to engage in simultaneously serving the Vaiṣṇavas, showing compassion to the living beings, and chanting the Holy Name. Anything that is favorable to this principle should be accepted, and whatever goes against it must be rejected." (Vol. I, p. 11)

"The name of the Lord and the Lord Himself are not two separate things, but one. When the sound of the Holy Name passes through the lips, the conditioned sense of hearing and consciousness start to process the sound as though it were a material sound and that is the way it is indeed perceived. As a result, only the external ear hears it. The other senses and the mind, which is the collector of sensory experience, are envious of the ear, which they consider to be an equal partner. The result is that such chanting



does not result in the cleansing of contaminants or *anarthas*. We do not even have the capacity to know intellectually that the Name and the Lord of the Name are one. But just as one of the Vedic sacraments for the young child is to have the ear pierced, when our spiritual ear has been pierced by the Holy Name, the other senses give up their enviousness of the sense of hearing. They no longer quibble with the ear, which alone can perceive the transcendental sound. Then the flood of prema pours forth from all of the spiritual senses and cleans away the contaminants of opposition and enviousness. With that, the Lord of the Name's beautiful form, qualities, associates and pastimes are revealed in the Name Itself and are experienced by the chanter as something quite distinct from his previous experiences within the material world. The kinds of worries and distractions of the mind typical of the conditioned living being cannot remain.

"We should constantly pray to the Holy Name for His mercy. One who is still in a contaminated state should not engage in *smaraṇa* of the daily cycle of the Lord's pastimes (*aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā*). When we engage in chanting the Holy Names, we are simultaneously engaged in hearing and the opportunity for remembering is included in that. One should not engage in such meditation on false premises." (Vol. II, pp. 118-119)

"If you establish centers in England with deities of Jagannath and Sriman Mahāprabhu, offer Indian-style preparations and distribute the maha prasāda, then the English will gradually develop a sympathy for India and faith in devotional practices, with the result that they will contribute to the Lord's service. I pray for the day when the people of that country will sing the names of Gaura and honor the transcendental prasāda from the temple with a spiritual attitude; then they will understand true spiritual life and cultivate Krishna consciousness." (Vol. II, pp. 141, dated May 27, 1934)

Near the time of his departure, Srila Prabhupada had the following to say about chanting the Holy Name

and the difference between Vaishnava *śrāddha* (or oblations to the deceased parents) and the traditional *śrāddha* of Hindu ritualism:

"Your father has gone to join the eternal abode of Jagannath Puri. Jagannath Puri is Vaikuntha itself. Whoever quits the body while chanting the Holy Names attains the eternal abode of the Lord. Anything that is done according to mundane considerations results in rebirth in the material world. The various rituals in the Vedic literature are within the realm of karma and have material sense objects as their goal. However, devotees dedicated to chanting the Holy Name can perform oblations to their deceased ancestors with the Lord's prasāda. Making oblations with any other kind of foodstuff is not a proof of intelligence. The fruitive rituals are an invitation to entanglement in the results of action. Those who are dedicated to the chanting of the Holy Name have no consideration of enjoying such results. Their relatives do have the duty, however, of making an offering to the Lord and then making an oblation with the prasāda for the well being of the departed soul. As a part of the same procedure, they should invite the devotees of the Lord for a feast of prasāda and a 24-hour kīrtan festival (*harināma-yajña*), a sacrifice to the Holy Name should be held. This is the procedure that is approved by the devotional scriptures. Other people who have some mixed conception of devotion may have a different understanding according to their state of advancement, but we do not give much credence to them." (Vol. III, pp. 10-11)

Prabhupada wrote the following about *Nāma-bhājana* and its fruits:

"While engaged in chanting the Holy Names, we are cultivating Krishna consciousness and ridding ourselves of any desire for sense enjoyments or the liberation of knowledge of Brahman. These contaminations are gradually destroyed by the chanting. Other than the chanting of the Holy Names, there is no other means of ridding ourselves of misfortune. Distinct from the names of this world, the Name



descends into the world from Vaikuntha and gives us the ear-piercing sacrament (*karṇa-bheda saṁskāra*). The ear that has been purified by this sacrament is eligible to hear the Holy Name. Once we have truly heard the Vaikuntha name, we become conscious of the Vaikuntha form, its presence and its joy, which protect us from the so-called pleasures of the material world. I am the object of Krishna's enjoyment; when Krishna is pleased with my eternal form, He draws me to Him and His transcendental beauty bewitches me. As Krishna's qualities become progressively revealed, I am taken, defeated, by His unlimited spiritual virtues. Then Krishna too begins to glorify the qualities of my spiritual form, causing my enthusiasm to increase. If my friends and relatives are favorable, I will be able to serve the Lord's associates in my spiritual body. At this point, the intense desire or *lobha* to participate in Krishna's divine sports arises. The Lord's name, form and qualities that are appropriate to the service of these lilas lead the devotee to an understanding of the Vedānta Sūtra's following sūtra: *sva-śabdonmānābhyām ca* (2.3.23). At this point, I can finally understand the Bhagavata's words, 'By hearing which, one becomes devoted to Him' (*yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet*).'' (Vol. III, pp. 14-15)

Srila Prabhupada had the following to say about the characteristics of those indifferent to the service of the Lord and the duty of their well-wishers: "The minds of those demons who merely imitate the devotees are not cleansed by their devotional activities. They thus take offenders to the Holy Names to be their spiritual masters. Because they see no way of satisfying their tongue and genitals with the true chanters of the Holy Name, they see them as representatives of Death, about to strike them with the bite of mortality. The motto of the Gaudiya Math is taken from Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, *param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*—'May the chanting of Krishna's name be ever victorious!'" (Vol. III, pp. 36-38)

Srila Prabhupada gave the following advice about *śrāddha* for those who have taken complete shelter of the Holy Name: "Those sons who do not chant the

Holy Name and are unable to resist public criticism should follow the rituals according to the Vedic brahminical system. Mr. **** will not object to this. Scriptures do not approve of thinking of departed devotees as *pretas*, or disembodied spirits. My disciple **** and others who have taken shelter of the Holy Name take prasāda every day. You should not be preoccupied by the Smārta vidhi. Keep your distance from the improper understanding that after death a Vaiṣṇava becomes a disembodied spirit and should be given oblations of unoffered foodstuffs." (Vol. III, pp. 41-42)

"Those engaged in chanting the Holy Name experience a state of astonishing rapture when they reach the advanced stage." (Vol. III, pp. 86)

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Prabhupada's Divine Lectures

Some notes taken from a speech given by Srila Prabhupada at the Nabadwip Dham Promotion Committee meeting (Navadvīpa-dhāma-pracāriṇī Sabhā).

Speaking before the Nabadwip Dham Promotion Committee, it is first of all necessary to mention the name of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur. If the glories of the Holy Dham have been spread and continue to be spread it is as a result of his transcendental mercy and through the power of his uncommon activities. In a very short time, all of his books have gone through numerous editions, and more continue to be published. Many educated people are hearing the glories of the pure, eternal religion as taught by Sriman Mahāprabhu. From East Bengal to distant Assam and southern Gunjam district in Orissa, many people thirsting for the truth have accepted His teachings. A great deal of preaching activity is going on in the great city of Calcutta, too. Many respectable, educated people are showing their esteem for this truth. Of course, it is true that there are many wicked people in the business of religion who do not give this message the respect it deserves, but anyone who has the slightest love for the truth will be able to see that these people are envious and filled with falsehood. We have spoken of this eternal religious truth to some sophisticated people in Dhaka, college professors, and they answered me, "We never had realized that there was such a high level of philosophical understanding in Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's religion."

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur wrote so many books on devotional service, but for various reasons he never had the opportunity to widely distribute them all. We are now attempting to do so on his behalf.

The goal of the Nabadwip Dham Promotion Committee—giving up bad association

I am glad to announce that today the Nabadwip Dham Promotion Committee is beginning to achieve its actual purpose. The most ordinary people, entangled in work and sense gratification, are beginning to give up or take sannyas from bad association. This is a realization of Sri Gaurasundara's description of the essence of Vaishnava behavior as the rejection of bad association: *asat-saṅga-tyāga ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra*. In this world, we are looking on matter in the enjoying spirit or as an object of enjoyment—that is—association with women or looking on things from the point of view arising out of association with women. Giving up this way of looking at matter is the renunciation of bad association or taking sannyas. The Bhagavata says:

*tato duḥsaṅgam utsrjya
satsu sajjeta buddhimān
santa evāśya chindanti
mano-vyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ*

"An intelligent person should therefore abandon all bad association and stay in the company of devotees. Only such holy persons can cut through one's unhealthy mental attachments through the use of their powerful words."
(SB 11.26.26)

The character of a liberated sannyasi or paramahamsa

A man might well have the external appearance of being a householder but still become a paramahamsa Vaishnava, the highest stage of sannyas. A paramaham-



sa Vaishnava may also have the appearance of being in another station of life—vanaprastha, brahmachari or sannyasi. The meaning of sannyas is renouncing all extraneous efforts and devoting all activities, body, mind and soul, to the service of Krishna. Thus even the lowliest Vaishnava is the best of all sannyasis. Paramahansa is another name for Vaishnava. Advaita Prabhu said to Nityananda Prabhu, “You are the master of the paramahansa path.” The Bhagavata also states: “One should renounce the four orders of life along with their symbols and transcend all regulations” (*sa-liṅgān āśramāns tyaktvācared avidhi-gocarah*—SB 11.18.28).

*It is not necessary to imitate the Vaishnava
acharyas, but to serve by following
in their footsteps*

The dress of the Vaishnava spiritual masters is that of the paramahansas. They are always resolute in their service of the Lord. It does not befit pretentious disciples and atheists like ourselves to take the spiritual master's dress. Nowadays so many people who do not even engage in devotional service take the dress meant for the most advanced stage of spiritual realization and renunciation and engage in immoral activities. We therefore say that it is more suitable to adopt the dress appropriate to our work and station in life and turn inwardly toward the service of the Lord.

*Offenses to the Gurus and the Vaishnavas are
the root cause of the drought of pure kirtan*

There is a drought of kirtan in the world today, and its cause is the disregard for the disciplic succession of spiritual masters. The kirtan that is going on is materialistic kirtan, it is conducted for business purposes, for accumulating money, women and worldly fame, for the pleasure of the senses. The pleasure of Krishna's senses or His satisfaction is not a consideration. Mahaprabhu referred to *tauryātrika*, i.e., the musical arts of dancing, singing and playing instruments, as a vice. Even so, when used in the service of Krishna, they are the best form of worship. If we

analyze kirtan as it is conducted today, however, it falls into the category of vice.

*The mercy of Bhaktivinoda Thakur
and the vow of his followers*

Not so long ago, so-called cultured society thought that Goloka or Vaikuntha were places like London or Paris, or perhaps just of the imagination. In his desire to serve the Lord, Bhaktivinoda Thakur understood the fully-conscious, immaterial nature of the Dham. He mercifully wrote many books to communicate his realization to the people of the world, many of which dealt with the Dham's spiritual nature. The Lord's abode is a manifestation of His glories.

The eleven kinds of heretical sects—Auls, Bauls, Kartabhaja, Neraneri, Atibari, Churadhari, Gauranagari, Prakrita Sahajiya, Sakhibheki, Smartas, and Jati Goswamis—and others have all brought the name of Mahaprabhu into disrepute. Each of these sects claimed identity with the spiritual religion of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Bhaktivinoda Thakur made all efforts to rid Mahaprabhu's pure religion of this shame and his followers continue to do so.



On Saturday, February 26, 1925, the Nabadwip Dham parikrama began. The previous evening, Srila Prabhupada spoke before a large assembly in a way that touched everyone's heart. I was not able to resist the desire to quote portions of this lecture here.

Saintly persons tell us that the desires for sense enjoyment and liberation are like two witches that are hovering, casting their spells on us. They warn us not to allow ourselves to be tempted and embrace these witches. It is a waste of time to bathe in the Ganges in order to win a wife or husband whose mortal body will one day rot. If we are fortunate enough that the light emanating from Krishna's toe-



nails illuminates our hearts, then we will hear the sound of His flute and, as servants of Krishna's beloved gopis, will throw aside all duties and run to meet Him on the site of the *rāsa* dance. When we arrive there, our male or female bodies will merge with the material energy.

The Sakhibhekis think of Krishna as an object of sense gratification and dress their material male body up to look like one of Krishna's girlfriends. This is nothing more than self-deception and cheating of others; such a corruption of intelligence will not affect anyone whose heart has been penetrated by the rays of light coming from Krishna's toenails. Sixty thousand sages in the Dandaka forest saw Ramachandra and were enthralled by His beauty. When they came to the end of their lives in male bodies, they took birth as gopis in the transcendental abode of Vraja.

Gentlemen! All of you are seeking your own ultimate good. Give up all forms of pretension—whether artificially taking a type of dress, or artificially making a display of spiritual emotion or devotion. Give up the worship of women and effeminacy. Surrender yourself to the eternal service of Srimati Radharani and become handmaidens of Sri Rupa Manjari. Just as Radha and Her girlfriends are always totally absorbed in the service of Krishna, and just as the manjaris are always engaged in the service of Radha and her eight chief sakhis, we should also serve Krishna, the divine Cupid, by satisfying His desires in spiritual bodies as divine females.

When bewildered by external considerations, the various goddesses or human women like Rudrani, Indrani, Brahmani, Varunani, Tara, Bharati, or Svaha think, "My mortal husband is Rudra, Indra, Brahma, or some other god or human." However, when they realize their eternal spiritual nature, they recognize that Krishna alone is their eternal husband and that Radharani is His most beloved. Therefore, the best way to serve Krishna is to become the handmaiden of Srimati Radharani and Her girlfriends and servants. Someone who offers everything he has to the Lord is

said to be liberated. Someone who holds back on making such a sacrifice is said to be bound or indifferent to the Lord's service.

*tomāra kanaka bhogera janaka
kanakera dvāre sevaha mādhave
kāminīra kāmā nahe tava dhāma
tāhāra mālīka kevala yādava
vaiṣṇavī pratiṣṭhā tāte kara niṣṭhā
tāhā nā bhajile labhibe raurava*

"Your money is a source of sense enjoyment; use it to serve Madhava. Desiring to charm women is not your business; Krishna is their only true enjoyer. Be determined to attain the prestige of being a Vaishnava. If you do not strive for this, you will end up in hell." (*Vaiṣṇava ke?*)

Jharu Thakur did not think of his wife as an object of enjoyment, but rather engaged her in the worship of Krishna. Everyone knows the story of Bilvamangala and Chintamani. Chintamani said to Bilvamangala, "If you had as much attachment for Krishna as you do for my body of flesh and blood, if you renounced your attraction for mundane beauty and turned it to the beautiful form of the divine cupid, Krishna, then how much you would gain!" Everyone should make an effort to understand this invaluable advice and give up his identification with the male or female body. As soon as Bilvamangala stopped seeing Chintamani as a woman, that is, as an object for his personal enjoyment, and started to see her as an object of service, then Krishna immediately appeared to him in the form of a transcendental Chintamani.

The idea that we can use Krishna for our enjoyment is hopeless. Krishna Himself is the enjoyer and not the object of enjoyment. Gauranga is not a playboy, or *nāgara*, that we can enjoy Him. This is the very limit of misconception born out of the reluctance to serve. Upon encountering his guru, Somagiri, Silhan Mishra gave up his superficial idea that Krishna was an object of personal enjoyment. He then changed his name and became known as Lilasuka and Bilvamangala.



Just as all men and woman are meant for the service of Krishna, so too is all money to be engaged in service of the Lord. Money is not to be used as a means for enjoying material nature, nor is it to be used for gaining mundane prestige by artificially renouncing it. When our understanding is false, we see money as a means to sense enjoyment; we should approach it with divine intelligence and use it as a means of serving the Lord. The Upanishads say that everything is in fact Brahman. *Sarvam khalv idam brahma*. When we use our money to serve the Lord, it is Brahman in the form of money. Such transcendental money is conducive to the worship of the Lord and the service of the Vaishnavas. Rejecting the use of things that favor devotional service is nothing more than false renunciation or *phalgu-vairāgya*; it is done only for show or to gain worldly prestige. Engage all your worldly possessions in the service of God. Be careful! Do not seek money, women or worldly prestige through devotional service, and never take refuge in greed, honor, prestige, hypocrisy, or forbidden acts.

Jayadeva Goswami wrote *Gīta-govinda*, his lyrical poem in twelve chapters; Srila Ramananda Raya wrote *Jagannātha-vallabha-nāṭaka*; Rupa Goswami wrote *Vidagdha-mādhava*; Chandi Das and Vidyapati wrote many songs; Prabodhananda Saraswati wrote *Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi*; Raghunath Das Goswami wrote *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*; Krishna Das Kaviraj wrote *Govinda-līlāmṛta*. Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur wrote *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*. You will be able to read all these books when you become qualified to enter into the spiritual mood of erotic love that permeates them. This will come about when you are completely free of the grasp of thoughts leading to material sense desire. This storehouse of good fortune will then be opened to you and you will be its genuine heirs. When your commitment to Krishna's service is absolute, then your natural, eternal relation to Krishna in one of five divine relationships will be opened to you. No one has any authority to serve Krishna without first being liberated. Krishna belongs to Radharani alone; without serving Radharani no one can ever be worthy of serving Krishna. So develop the anxiety to become Radharani's

servant girl and slave, with a natural predilection for love of Krishna in the conjugal mood.





On the occasion of his last Vyasa Puja in 1936

Remembering Srila Prabhupada's Disappearance

Sur most worshipable spiritual master Om Vishnupada 108 Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur was like the sun in the firmament of the Gaudiya Vaishnava world. After displaying his pastimes in this world for sixty-three years, at about 5:30 A.M., on Thursday, January 1, 1937, a *kṛṣṇā caturthī*, he entered the eternal abode, joining Radha and Krishna in the predawn pastimes (*niśānta-līlā*) of their eternal 24-hour cycle of activities in Vraja. At the end of every night, Radha and Krishna lie intertwined in embrace, becoming as one body. It is at this moment, when their united form of Gaurasundara is eternally manifest, that Varshabhanavi-dayita Das, their servant, joined them. This moment is considered a Wednesday by Indian calculations, according to which a new day begins with the sunrise.

Thirty-two years have passed since Prabhupada ended his earthly sojourn. One by one, many of his disciples have already entered the eternal abode, each of them attaining direct service to Krishna according to his own qualifications. Those who remain on this earth continue to follow his instructions and his teachings so that they can become worthy to rejoin and serve him directly when the moment arrives.

bhajite bhajite samaya āsile e deha chāriyā diba

"I will continue to worship until the moment arrives when I shall give up this body."

About two months before entering his eternal abode, Srila Prabhupada went to Puri Dham and stayed there at his bhajan kutir near the beach. To all those who came to see him, he gave the warning: "Get busy and worship the Lord undeviatingly. Not much time is left." His disciples heard him constantly repeat the verses of

Rupa Goswami's first *Govardhanāṣṭakam* and those of Raghunath Das's *Govardhana-vāsa-prārthanā-daśakam*.

Mahaprabhu Himself used to see Govardhana in the sand dunes by the ocean, and the Yamuna River in the blue waters of the ocean itself. For Him, the gardens in Puri were Vrindavan itself. Overwhelmed with the loving mood of Radha, Gaurasundara was day and night absorbed in the separation from Krishna, uttering the words:

*kāhān mora prāna-nātha murali-vadana
kāhān karon kāhān pān vrajendra-nandana
kāhāre kahiba kebā jāne mora duḥkha
vrajendra-nandana binu phāte mora buka*

"Where is the Lord of my life, Krishna, the flute player? What can I do to find him? Where is the son of Maharaj Nanda? To whom can I speak to of my distress? Who would even understand me? Without the son of Nanda Maharaj, my heart splits in two."
(CC 2.2.15-16)

With tears washing over his face, Srila Prabhupada would also recite other verses from the Chaitanya Charitamrita that revealed Mahaprabhu's heartfelt emotions. In this way he remained absorbed in Krishna consciousness. Srila Prabhupada stayed in his cottage amongst the Puri sand dunes for the appearance day of Madhvacharya, Govardhana Puja, and the disappearance day of Srila Gaura Kishor Das Babaji. He announced that the refrains from the two *aṣṭakas* mentioned above were special mantras for worshipping Govardhana Hill:

pratyāśāṁ me tvam kuru govardhana pūrṇām

"O Govardhana, fulfill every one of my wishes!"



nija-nikata-nivāsam dehi govardhana tvam

“O Govardhana, please give me residence somewhere near you!”

Some time before coming to Puri, Prabhupada had spent the month of Purushottam in Vraja Dham. He left Calcutta for Mathura on August 12, 1936. While in Mathura, he stayed at Shivalaya Bhavan, a house in the cantonment area. During the time he was residing there, he remained absorbed in the intoxicating ecstasy of the Holy Names. He daily traveled to Vrindavan to Madhumangala Kunj, where he gave classes on the Bhagavatam. During this stay, he also inaugurated a place of worship at Govardhana.

Starting October 17, 1934, Srila Prabhupada observed the Karttik vrata in the Mathura area along with his devotees. During this time, he set the example of hearing and chanting about the Lord's *aṣṭa-kālīyā līlā*. On October 29, he discovered the place in the Sat Ghara neighborhood of Mathura city where Rupa Goswami would come for darshan of Madhavendra Puri's Gopal deity. Then on November 1, he and his party visited various sites in the Mathura area, such as Chandra Sarovara, Pasauli, Gauri Tirtha, and Paigaon. At each stop, he gave inspired talks on the lilas which took place in these spots, leaving his audience amazed with his descriptions of the Lord's ever-fresh pastimes.

On October 9, 1932, the appearance day of Sri Madhvacharya, Srila Prabhupada and countless devotees set the example of undertaking the 84 kros pilgrimage tour of Vraja mandala. Stopping at every place where Krishna had engaged in His pastimes, He lectured and arranged for Hari-kathā to be spoken in various different languages for the benefit of the devotees who had come from different regions of India. He himself lectured in Hindi on Rupa Goswami's *Upadeśāmṛta* to a large assembly of Vraja residents and scholars on the holy piece of land where Radha Kund and Shyama Kund meet. A photograph of Prabhupada instructing his disciples near Radha Kund and Lalita Kund during the parikrama

was published in the weekly *Gauḍīya* magazine. It was a beautiful sight to see the numerous tents that housed the pilgrims. Wherever the devotees camped, a small city came into being.

In 1935, Radharani's personal companion, Srila Prabhupada, observed the Karttik month austerities (*ūrjā-vrata* or *Dāmodara-vrata*) on the shores of Radha Kund. During this period, he spoke on the Upanishads, Chaitanya Charitamrita, and Srimad Bhagavatam, circumambulated Radha Kund daily, and we listened to him give descriptions of the Lord's *aṣṭa-kālīyā līlā*. He took this opportunity to inaugurate the “Vraja Dham Publicity Committee” (*Vraja-dhāma-pracārīṇī Sabhā*). On November 4, Srila Prabhupada installed deities at the Kunja Bihari Math at Radha Kund, and two days later, he inaugurated Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's *puṣpa-samādhi* memorial and *bhāva-sevā* (serving the deities according to the *aṣṭa-kālīyā līlā*) at Vrajananda-sukhada Kunja.

Srimati Radharani and Sri Radha Kund were Prabhupada's inspiration and life-giving elixir. Whenever he spoke of Sri Radha's mercy or glorified Her, Prabhupada would completely lose himself in divine ecstasy. In particular, he relished the following verse from Prabodhananda's *Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi*.

*yasyāḥ kadāpi vasanāñcala-khelanottha-
dhanyātīdhanya-pavanena kṛtārtha-mānī
yogīndra-durgama-gatir madhusūdano'pi
tasyā namo'stu vṛṣabhānu-bhuvo diśe'pi*

“Even though He Himself is the unattainable objective of the greatest yogis, whenever Madhusudana gets a scent of the most fortunate breezes that have been produced by the movement of Radharani's clothes, He considers Himself to have been fulfilled. I therefore even offer my obeisance to the general direction where the daughter of King Vrishabhanu happens to be.” (RRSN 2)

Prabhupada's eyes would fill up with tears and his voice would break with emotion when he recited this verse. He also cherished Raghunath Das Goswami's *Vilāpa-*



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kusumāñjali, the five chapters of the *Rāsa-līlā*, the *Gopī-gīta* and *Bhramara-gīta* from the *Bhagavatam*, Rupa Goswami's *Stava-mālā* and Raghunath's *Stavāvalī*. We personally heard him relish verses from these books many times.

Śrīla Prabhupada composed a translation in Bengali verse of Rupa Goswami's *Upadeśāmṛta*. The following is his version of the ninth verse:

vaikuṇṭha haite śreṣṭha mathurā nagarī
janama labhiyā jathā kṛṣṇa-candra hari
mathurā haite śreṣṭha vṛndāvana-dhāma
jathā sādhiyāche hari rāsotsava-kāma
vṛndāvana haite śreṣṭha govardhana-śaila
gīridhārī gāndharvikā jatha kṛīḍā kaila
govardhana haite śreṣṭha rādhā-kuṇḍa-tāta
premāmṛta bhāsāila gokula-lampāta
govardhana giritāta rādhā-kuṇḍa chāri
anyatra je kare nija kuñja puṣpa-bārī
nirbodha tāhāra sama keha nāhi āra
kuñja-tīra sarvottama sthāna premādhāra

"The city of Mathura is superior to Vaikuntha, for the moonlike Krishna took His birth there. Finer than Mathura is Vrindavan because Krishna held His Rasa dance there. Govardhana hill, where the holder of the hill, Giridhari Krishna, and His beloved Gandharvika so frequently enjoyed their intimate pastimes is superior to even Vrindavan. Even more auspicious than Govardhana is Radha Kund, where the playboy of Gokula unleashed a flood of ecstatic love. Anyone who makes his flower garden and cottage somewhere other than this Radha Kund at the foot of Govardhana is surely the most unfortunate creature; no one is more foolish than such a person. Radha Kund is the most wonderful place in creation; it is the reservoir of love."

And this is Prabhupada's rendition of verse 11:

śrīmatī rādhikā kṛṣṇa-kāntā-śiromaṇi
kṛṣṇa-priya madhye tānra sama nāhi dhanī
muni-gaṇa śāstre rādhā-kuṇḍera varṇane
gāndharvikā tulya-kuṇḍa karaye gaṇane

nāradādi priya-varge je prema durlabha
anya sādhakete tāhā kabhu nā sulabha
kintu rādhā-kuṇḍe snāna jei jana kare
madhura-rasete tāra snāne siddhi dhare
aprākṛta-bhāve sadā jugala-sevana
rādhā-pāda-padma labhe sei hari-jana

"Srimati Radharani is foremost amongst all of Krishna's damsels; of them, no one is Her equal in beauty or good fortune. The sages and the scriptures have said that Her pond, Radha Kund, is in every way equivalent to Her. The kind of divine love that is inaccessible to Narada and the other sages is never attained easily by other sadhakas. However, if they bathe just once in the delicious waters of Radha Kund, they will experience the flavors of prema in the mood of conjugal love; they will win the transcendental service to the Divine Couple and the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani."

And he concludes the *Upadeśāmṛta* with the following couplet:

śrī-vārṣabhānavī devī kabe dayita-dāsere
kuṇḍa-tīre sthāna dibe nija-jana kare

"When will the daughter of Vrishabhanu make this servant of Her Beloved Her own and give him a place on the banks of Radha Kund?"

In these translations, Śrīla Prabhupada was unable to keep his internal mood toward the Divine Couple concealed any longer.

Similarly, he also stated that the meaning of his own name, Varshabhanavi-dayita Das ("servant of the beloved of the daughter of Vrishabhanu) was made clear by the last two lines of the following verse (no. 102) from Raghunath Das's *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*,

āśā-bharair amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit
kālo mayātigamitaḥ kila sāmpratam hi
tvam cet kṛpām mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kim me
prāṇair vrajena ca varoru bakāriṇāpi



"O beautiful-thighed Srimati Radharani, I have spent a few moments revealing to You the hopes that well up in me like an ocean of ambrosia. If now You are not merciful to me, then of what use to me is my very own life, and what is the use of Vraja? Indeed, the enemy of Baka Himself is of no avail to me whatsoever!"

Bhaktivinoda Thakur's similar sentiments are found in the following couplet:

*ātapa-rahita sūraja nāhi jāni
rādhā-virahita kṛṣṇa nāhi māni*

"Just as there is no such thing as a sun without heat or light, I do not accept a Krishna who is without Srimati Radharani!" (*Gītāvalī, Rādhāṣṭaka, 8*)

Prabhupada saw the Yoga Pith in Mayapur, where Mahaprabhu appeared in this world, as being Mahavana of Gokula, the place where Krishna passed His early infancy with Mother Yashoda. He considered the house of Srivasa Pandit to be Vrindavan, the site of the Rasa dance itself; to him, the site of Chaitanya Math at Chandrasekhara Acharya's house was nothing less than Govardhana itself. Right next to that spot, he had his bhajan kutir built and a tank excavated; he called the tank Radha Kund. From 1897, he made his home there, annually observing the *Cātur-māsya-vrata* in an exemplary fashion according to the Vaishnava scriptures: he would cook *haviṣyānna* himself and then eat it directly off the ground without using a plate; he would also sleep on the ground without a pillow. Srila Prabhupada also displayed an exemplary character in observing a vow of celibacy from childhood. On his father Bhaktivinoda Thakur's orders, he took *bhāgavatī dikṣā*, esoteric initiation into the Bhagavata Dharma, from the *avadhūta*, Paramahansa Srila Gaura Kishor Das Goswami. This took place in January of 1901.

While staying in Mayapur in 1905, Srila Prabhupada followed in the footsteps of Hari Das Thakur, undertaking a vow of chanting ten crores (a billion) of Holy Names, chanting a minimum of three lakhs

(300,000) every single day. In 1909, he had a cottage built on the site of Chandrasekhara Acharya's house where he continued to follow his vrata, worshipping Sri Guru, Gauranga, Gandharvika and Giridhari, and visualizing himself on the banks of Radha Kund.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur disappeared in 1914 on the disappearance day of Srila Gadadhar Pandit Goswami, the dark moon day of the month of Asharh. In the early morning of November 17, 1915, Uttāna Ekadasi, Srila Gaura Kishor Das Babaji entered into his eternal pastimes. Srila Prabhupada was living at the Yoga Pith at that time. Having experienced the disappearance of the two most important spiritual guides in his life, Srila Prabhupada was overcome with a sense of loss and separation. Feeling helpless in the absence, he spent nights lamenting in his grief. Then one night, near dawn, he had a dream in which he saw the five members of the Pancha Tattva present in the *nāṭa-mandira*, accompanied by Jagannath Das Babaji, Bhaktivinoda Thakur, Gaura Kishor Das Babaji, and all of Mahaprabhu's other associates. The Lord spoke, "Saraswati! Don't give up hope, but preach My message with unflagging enthusiasm. Immeasurable wealth and countless people are waiting for you. You are neither helpless nor powerless." After having this amazing dream vision, Srila Prabhupada became joyful and enthusiastic again.

On Srīman Mahaprabhu's appearance day, March 7, 1918, in Chandrasekhara's house in Sri Mayapur, Srila Prabhupada took the renounced order of life according to the pure Vedic directives. This institution of the renounced order of life, or tridāṇḍi-sannyāsa, is particular to the Vaishnava religion. It is mentioned in the Upanishads, *Manu-saṁhitā*, *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and many other scriptures. In particular, the custom has furthermore been preserved to this day in the Ramanuja sampradaya. From the time of his official renunciation, Prabhupada spent the remaining 18 years of his life preaching the chanting of the Holy Names, establishing temples and installing deities; he discovered lost holy places, set up printing presses on which he published periodicals and books in numerous languages. Through these



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books and his own programs of preaching, Srila Prabhupada taught Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's gospel, His philosophy and His ethics. After devoting his life to this mission, Srila Prabhupada joined Radha and Govinda in Their eternal pastimes.

Prabhupada's zeal for Hari-kathā was so great that he would go on speaking hour after hour and would still get irritated if someone even hinted that it was time to eat. Prabhupada used to say that to awaken a single bewildered individual to his identity as a servant of Krishna required an effort equivalent to gallons and gallons of blood. If any of his disciples misunderstood the Vaishnava philosophy and went astray, he would shed tears of sadness, so great was his affection for them. When it came to defeating atheistic philosophical opinions, he could be harder than a thunderbolt, but when talking about the religion of love, he could be softer than a rose. If any temple director indicated that there were difficulties due to an insufficiency of funds, Prabhupada would immediately arrange for money to be sent so that the devotees would be spared from any unnecessary suffering. He loved his disciples so much that he would become extremely preoccupied if any of them fell ill. The love of a million parents for their children taken together could not compare with the love he felt for those who had taken shelter of him. And should anyone come to Srila Prabhupada burdened with worries, they found that their troubles, in only a few moments, seemed to vanish by the force of his boundless affection.

Even Srila Prabhupada's chastisements seemed sweet. We considered it a point of pride to be chastised by him; we thought it a sign of being accepted. And if we saw his lotus face light up with satisfaction, we would consider all our hard work to have been worthwhile. We would think, like Bhaktivinoda Thakur,

*tomāra sevāya duḥkha haya jata
seo to parama sukha
sevā-sukha-duḥkha parama sampad
nāsaye avidyā-duḥkha*

"However much suffering we undergo for your serv-

ice, we consider it a joy. The happiness or distress incurred in serving you is our greatest treasure, because it destroys the miseries of the life of ignorance." (*Saraṅgati* 16)

On the other hand, if we were not able to fulfill the desires of our spiritual master, we would feel great distress. Whatever we did, our bhajan, our meditation, our efforts to control the mind, our chanting of japa, our austerities and penances, were all for the service of our spiritual master. He was the most dear to Krishna, so if we were able to please him by any means possible—*yena kenāpy upāyena*—we considered that action to be the best bhajan, the best practice of spiritual life, our everything.

If Srila Prabhupada left to go somewhere else, his disciples felt great pain and spent their time thinking of his return. I remember how we would cry and pray for his quick return and now, thirty-two years have gone in what seems like the twinkling of an eye. How can such a length of time have passed in this unbearable separation? *kena vā āchaye prāṇa ki sukha lāgiyā*—"What pleasure keeps me living?" (Narottama Das, *Prārthanā*) I wonder whether I have not committed so many offenses to the Holy Name and to my spiritual master that my heart has become as hard as stone and I can no longer feel the pain of his separation. If I truly had any love for Srila Prabhupada, would I remain here in this world, extending this life that has lost its meaning? O most merciful Gurudeva! Please save this most fallen servant! Even though I am worthless and fallen, please give me a place at your lotus feet. One time, you had given me a place as the least servant of your servants. You even assured us that you would return again and again to this world to deliver the unfortunate living beings. O most merciful Gurudeva! Your heart is so filled with compassion! Prabhu! In spite of the offenses I have committed, knowingly or unknowingly, please give me a place at your feet so that I may serve you.

The day before you left this world, you placed your two feet on my chest and gazed at me with your merciful eyes. I am ignorant; I know nothing of scripture



and have no ability to discern right from wrong. Even so, I pray to you to purify me, correct me and make me worthy to serve you. Reveal to me my faults and errors, recognize me as the servant of your servant, and make me worthy of your service. Mahaprabhu said to Murari Gupta:

*sei bhakta dhanya je nā chāre prabhura carana
sei prabhu dhanya je nā chāre nija-jana
durdaive sevaka jadi jāya anya sthāne
sei śhākura dhanya tāre cule dhari āne*

“Fortunate is that devotee who does not give up the shelter of his master, and glorious is that master who does not abandon his servant. If by some misfortune a servant falls down and leaves his service, glorious is that master who pulls him by the hair and brings him back.” (CC 3.4.46-7)

It seems to me that the days I have been given on this earth are winding up; perhaps the sun of my life in this world is near to setting. And yet, I somehow have not awakened. You whispered the Maha Mantra into my right ear and placed the japa mala in my hand, telling me to chant a lakh of Holy Names every single day. But alas! I am still indifferent to the chanting of Krishna’s names. Even though so many of my godbrothers have shown me their own example and have warned about the importance of chanting the Holy Name, I still do not take this duty seriously. Far from feeling love for the Holy Name, I don’t even enjoy chanting. Does this mean that I have committed so many offenses to my spiritual master, the Vaishnavas and the Holy Name that I am forever to be bereft of the Name’s mercy? O Srila Prabhupada! Please give me your blessings; give me strength; give me a taste for chanting the Holy Name! Drive away the fog of bewilderment from my soul!

The *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* quotes the following verses from scripture about guru tattva:

*harau ruṣṭe gurus trātā
gurau ruṣṭe na kaścana*

*tasmāt sarva-prayatnena
gurum eva prasādayet*

“If Krishna is angry, the spiritual master will save you. If the spiritual master is angry, no one can save you. Therefore make all efforts to please your spiritual master.” (HBV 4.360)

*ācāryasya priyaṁ kuryāt
prāṇair api dhanair api
karmanā manasā vācā
sa yāti paramām gaṭim*

“Do things that are pleasing to your spiritual master with your life and your wealth, with your work, your thoughts and your speech, and you will go to the supreme destination.”

(HBV 1.100, from *Viṣṇu-smṛti*)

*ye gurv-ājñām na kurvanti
pāpiṣṭhāḥ puruṣādhamāḥ
na teṣām naraka-kleṣa-
nistāro muni-sattama*

“Those who do not obey the commands of their spiritual master are the most sinful, lowest of human beings. O best of the sages, for them there is no salvation from the sufferings of hell.”

(HBV 4.367, from *Agastya-saṁhitā*)

*yo mantraḥ sa guruḥ sāṅkṣāt
yo guruḥ sa hariḥ smṛtāḥ
gurur yasya bhavet tuṣṭas
tasya tuṣṭo hariḥ svayam*

“The mantra is the guru himself, and the guru is said to be the Lord Himself. If the spiritual master is pleased with his disciple, then the Lord Himself is pleased with that person.” (HBV 4.353, from *Vāmana-kalpa*)

*guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana śāstrera pramāṇe
guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā karena bhakta-gaṇe*

“According to the revealed scriptures, the spiritual master is the manifestation of Krishna. Krishna

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comes in the form of the guru to show His mercy to the devotees." (CC 1.1.45)

For this reason, we pay our obeisances to Srila Prabhupada as follows:

*śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti-
vīrahāya namo'stu te*

"We offer obeisance to thee, the embodiment of Gaurāṅga's power of compassion."

Just a week prior to his leaving this world, on the morning of December 23, 1936, Srila Prabhupada gave some special instructions to his disciples about the way they should carry on their sadhana and bhajan. Though they were intended for his own disciples, they are of interest for anyone who desires spiritual perfection. Only a few of Srila Prabhupada's disciples are left in the world, nevertheless, they should pay special attention to these instructions and continually discuss them amongst themselves:

1. All of you please preach the message of Rupa and Raghunath with great enthusiasm. The ultimate object of our desires is to become specks of dust at the lotus feet of the followers of Rupa Goswami.

2. All of you remain united in submission to the Lord's form as the repository of devotion (*āśraya-vigraha*), seeking to satisfy the transcendental senses of the one, non-dual supreme consciousness. Make your way through this impermanent, transitory life in whatever way you can, keeping the goal of worshipping the Lord foremost in your minds. Don't abandon this goal, even in the face of hundreds of dangers, insults, or persecutions.

3. Don't lose your spirit if you see that the majority of people cannot accept the principle of selfless service to the Supreme Lord. Never abandon your bhajan, hearing and chanting Krishna-kathā, the be-all and end-all of your devotional life. Please always chant the name

of the Lord, being humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree.

4. Our true being and identity is to be the dust at the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Prabhu, life after life. The channel that flows from Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur can never be obstructed. Remember this and vow to double your efforts to fulfill Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's desires. Amongst you are many capable and worthy individuals. We seek nothing for ourselves; our only motto is:

*ādadānas tṛṇaṁ dantair
idaṁ yāce punaḥ punaḥ
śrīmad-rūpa-padāmbhoja-
dhūliḥ syāṁ janma-janmani*

"Taking grass between my teeth, I pray repeatedly that I may become a speck of dust at Sri Rupa Goswami's lotus feet, birth after birth." (Raghunath Das Goswami, *Muktācarita*.)

5. In the material world we continuously come into contact with difficulties. There is no need for us to be bewildered by these difficulties, nor should it be our objective to remove them. Rather we should think of what will be left to be attained after all these obstacles are removed. We must learn about our eternal life while we are still in this world. Our only real obligation is to go beyond duality and to enter that realm of eternal fulfillment.

6. In this world, no person should be a special object of attraction or aversion. All arrangements we make here last only for moments. Our only unavoidable necessity is to seek out the ultimate goal of life.

7. Work together with a single purpose—to win the qualifications to serve the original repository of love for Krishna, Srimati Radharani.

8. May the current of ideas propagated by Rupa



Goswami flow throughout the world.

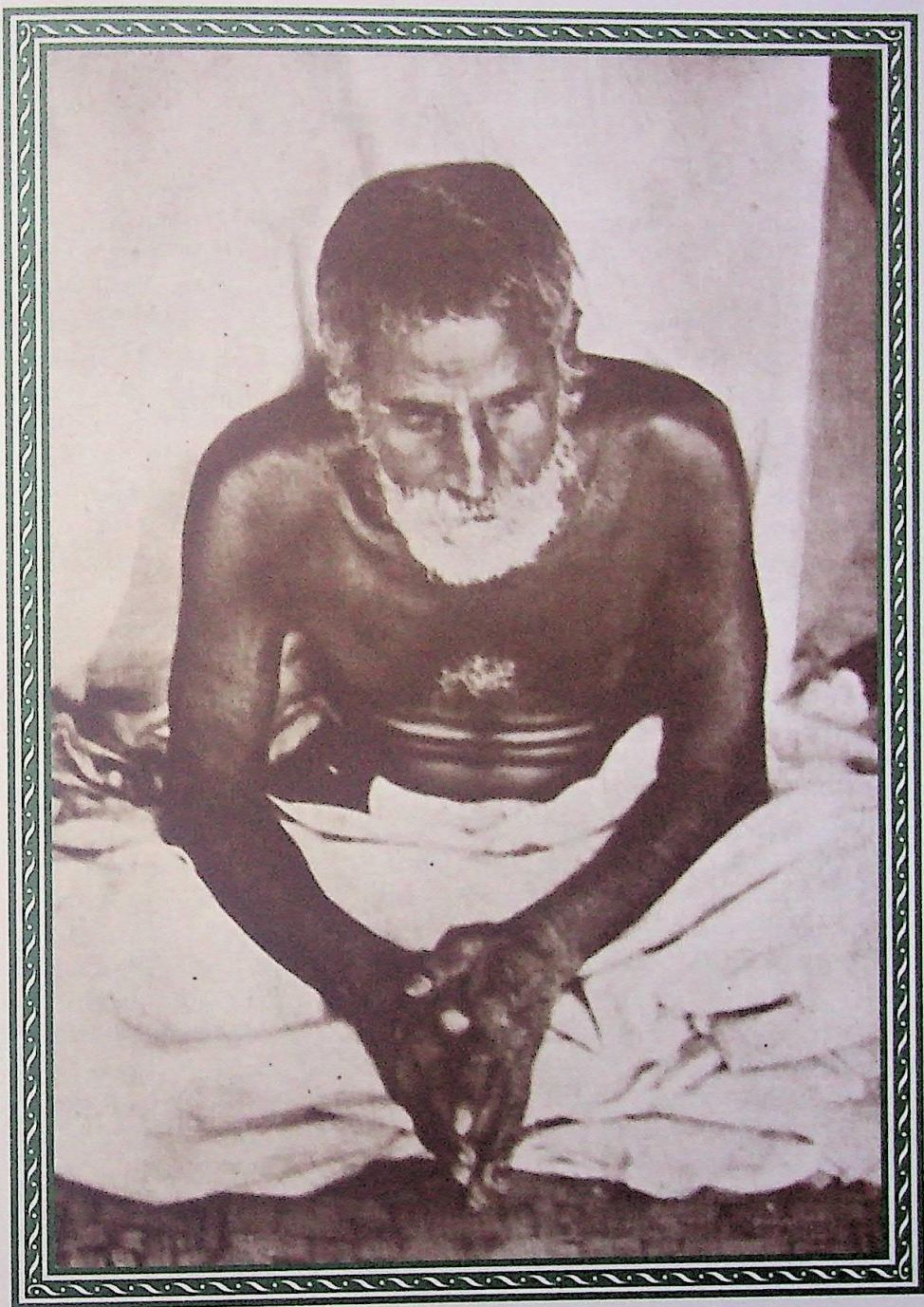
9. May we never under any circumstances become indifferent to the seven-tongued sacrificial flame of the Holy Name. If our attraction to the Holy Name continually increases, we will achieve all perfection.

10. Remain exclusively faithful to the followers of Rupa Goswami and preach Rupa and Raghunath's teachings enthusiastically and fearlessly.

Dear Srila Prabhupada! These teachings spoken by you are in no way different from the Vedas. The scripture tells us that *ājñā gurūṇāṁ hy avicaraṇīyā*—"the orders of the spiritual master are not subject to question." We therefore pray for the ability to follow them to the letter, without any ulterior motive. We pray to you most humbly to take care of us eternally by bestowing upon us clear intelligence, strength of heart, and your blessings.

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Srila Gaura Kishor Das Babaji Maharaj

The True Spirit of Separation

After Gaura Hari, who descended to purify this age of Kali, made Himself invisible to the eyes of the world, the preaching of His religion of love carried on more or less uninterruptedly up until the time of Baladeva Vidyabhushan. In the time that followed, though there were still many advanced devotees present on the planet, a period of darkness descended on Mahaprabhu's school of devotion. Many heterodox sects came into existence that vocally claimed to be following Mahaprabhu, but in fact were simply using His name to promote their own false doctrines. The Lord Himself could not tolerate deviation from the truths of the Gaudiya Vaishnava doctrine and He would be greatly pained by misrepresentations of the divine relations between the Lord and His devotees. For this reason, Svarupa Damodar and Rupa Goswami appeared again at the desire of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu through Srila Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakur and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada, to preserve and protect the doctrines taught by Srila Rupa Goswami. Preaching these doctrines of pure devotion, these two great souls gave great joy to the Lord Himself and to all of his followers in the Gaudiya Vaishnava school.

A Vaishnava poet wrote the following verse about Srila Prabhupada:

*suddha-bhakti-mata jata upadharma kavalita
heriyā lokera mane trāsa
hāni susiddhānta bāṇa upadharma khāna khāna
sajjanera bāṛāla ullāsa*

"People were disturbed to see that heterodox sects had swallowed up all the doctrines of pure devotion. Srila Prabhupada came along and fired the arrows of

proper theological conclusions, thus bringing all the pious people joy."

Between them, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and Srila Prabhupada wrote more than a hundred books on devotional subjects, including translations and commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Chaitanya Charitamrita, Chaitanya Bhagavata, etc. By doing so, they performed an indescribable service for Gaudiya Vaishnava society. Today, those who are free from prejudice, who recognize and approve the truth and good qualities in others, lament the absence of these two great acharyas, what to speak of their disciples and grand-disciples. Those who follow the teachings and example of these two great acharyas sense their absence sorely. Nevertheless, those who truly feel their separation are fairly rare, for it is beyond the capacity of those who wish to equate materialistic activities with the spiritual to understand the contribution they made—namely their propagation and bestowal of pure devotional service consisting of the culture of those activities that are pleasing to Krishna, without any desire for liberation or sense gratification.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur appeared in this world in the afternoon of Sunday, Sept. 2, 1834 (Bhadra 18, 1245 Bengali), 352 years after the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. His disappearance took place just before midday on June 23, 1914 (Asharh 9, 1305 Bengali year), which also happened to be the disappearance day of Gadadhar Pandit Goswami. I never had the good fortune to personally see Bhaktivinoda Thakur, though I did have the opportunity to hear of his superhuman glories directly from Srila Prabhupada, both through his spoken word and his writings. On the other hand, it is far



beyond my finite capacities to adequately describe all the wonderful things that I heard and witnessed of Srila Prabhupada's glories during my personal association with him. I saw that he would not tolerate even the slightest disrespect to the names of Lord Krishna, to His devotees, to His deity form, nor to His person. Once, he was staying as a guest at the house of a famous personality, yet he fasted for three days without his host's knowledge, refusing even to take water out of protest to such disrespect. On another occasion, he was greatly disturbed when he heard a hereditary Goswami speak of Raghunath Das Goswami in terms of his caste of birth. There were many incidents of this type.

He could be as fierce as thunder when arguing against heretical doctrines, but when relishing the flavors of pure devotion, he revealed a greater softness than that of a flower, shedding tears of ecstasy. Both these characteristics were seen in his dealings with his disciples, in which he proved his affectionate feelings for them. Srila Prabhupada was the personification of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's message.

Those who have deep love for their spiritual master remained immersed in the ocean of his divine instructions for as long as he was present in this world. They did everything they could to preach and act in a way that fulfilled his desires and experienced the great joy of associating with him directly in the most personal way. Now, however, in his absence, they are overwhelmed by most painful feelings of separation. The pain bursts out from their heart and tears flow from their eyes and onto their chest like the torrents of rain in the month of Shravan. Their minds are disturbed by the desire, never to be again fulfilled, of hearing their guru speak the nectarean topics of Krishna. They repeatedly sing the verses written by Narottama in which he reveals the depth of his loss at being separated from the company of the great Vaishnavas.

*je ānila prema-dhana karuṇā pracura
hena prabhu kothā gela vaiṣṇava ṭhākura*

"My lord, the worshipable Vaishnava, brought us the

wealth of love for Krishna out of his unlimited compassion. Alas, where has he gone?" (*Prārthanā*)

*svarūpa sanātana rūpa raghunātha bhāṭṭa-yuga
lokanātha siddhānta-sāgara
śunitām se saba kathā ghucita manera vyathā
tabe bhāla haita antara*

"When I heard the divine words of Svarup Damodar, Sanatan, Rupa, Raghunath Das, Raghunath Bhatta and Gopal Bhatta, as well as Lokanath Goswami, the ocean of spiritual knowledge, the anguish of my mind would disappear and my heart would feel restored." (*Prema-bhakti-candrikā*)

Lost in this mood of separation, how can any consideration based on worldly competition be of interest to them? How can the witches of the desire for liberation or sense gratification remain hidden in their hearts? Our mundane feelings of attraction and aversion for material objects light the fire of envy, egoism, and hatred so much so that it seems they have the ability to destroy this world. If even a drop of pure affection arises in our hearts for the incarnation of Mahaprabhu's magnanimity, then no place will remain for these animal propensities like hatred, jealousy, or violence to others.

*harṣāmarṣādibhir bhāvair
ākrāntam yasya mānasam
katham tatra mukundasya
sphūrti-sambhāvanā bhavet*

"And those who are either overcome or bewildered by the pleasures of union with the objects of sense in terms of facades of physical beauty, fine food, beautiful music, delightful odors and sensual touch, or the anxiety that comes from their non-attainment, can never experience Mukunda, the one who gives (*da*) us prema, i.e., that which makes a mockery (*ku* from *kutsita*) of liberation (*mu* or *mukti*). They can never experience Mukunda, whose beautiful smile is like the white kunda flower (*mu* for *mukha*, or mouth, and *kunda*)." (*Padma-purāṇa*, BRS 1.2.114)

In the twelfth chapter of the Gita, the Lord also says:



*yasmān nodvijate loko
lokān nodvijate ca yaḥ
harṣāmarṣa-bhayodvegair
mukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ*

“The devotee who is neither disturbed by the world nor causes the world any disturbance, who is free from the pull of euphoria, anger and fear, is most dear to Me.” (Bg 12.15)

*yo na hr̥ṣyati na dveṣṭi
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
śubhāśubha-parityāgī
bhaktimān yaḥ sa me priyaḥ*

“The devoted person who is free from elation, anger, sorrow and craving, who neither seeks the pleasant nor shuns the unpleasant, is ever dear to Me.” (Gita 12.17)

How can any attachment or hatred for material objects find a place in the heart where attachment to the guru, the eternal associate of Srimati Radharani, has awakened? In such a heart, there is constant awareness of the absolute necessity of attaining the supreme goal of life, loving service to Sri Krishna. This alone is the ultimate purpose of life for every single living entity. Srila Prabhupada himself said: “The ultimate object of our desires is to become specks of dust at the lotus feet of the followers of Rupa Goswami. Remain united in following the āśraya-vigraha in order to satisfy the transcendental senses of the one, non-dual supreme truth... May we never under any circumstances become indifferent to the seven-tongued sacrificial flame of the Holy Name. If our attraction to it remains ever-increasing, we will achieve all perfection.”

We pray that our commitment to these last instructions of his manifest presence in this world be unfailing. May we never interpret these words to elicit secondary meanings that allow us to engage in sense gratification, but rather, single-mindedly dedicating all our energies and working together, aim for the pleasure of “the senses of the one, non-dual Supreme

Truth,” making it the one and only goal of our lives. If we wish to show our love and faith for our spiritual master, it will be by following these teachings. However, rather than giving full attention to the desires of the spiritual master, we may focus on serving his body or the extensions of his body represented by temples and ashrams. If we do so, we will never be free of the pitfall of seeing the guru in purely human terms (*martyāśad-dhiḥ*). The Lord can only be seen through the path of transcendental sound (*śrutekṣita-pathaḥ*) and the spiritual master, being his manifest representative, is also perceptible through divine sound vibration.

The words *śrutekṣita-pathaḥ* (SB 3.9.11) are broken down as follows: *śruta* means “through hearing” or “revelation”; *ikṣita* means “seen” or “perceived”; *pathaḥ* means “the way” or “the path.” This compound word thus means, “He to whom the way is perceived through hearing revealed knowledge.” For this reason we offer our respects to the guru with the words:

*tat-padaṁ darsitaṁ yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

“I pay my humble obeisance to the spiritual master who has shown me that supreme truth.”

Srila Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur interprets the words *śrutekṣita-pathaḥ* in a slightly different manner in his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary:

*ādaḥ guru-mukhāt śrutaḥ paścād ikṣitaḥ sāṅkṣāt-kṛtas
ca panthā yasya saḥ | yena pathā tvam hr̥t-sarojaṁ
āyāto ‘si tam | panthānaḥ sādhanā-bhakti-prakārāḥ ta
eva suṣṭhu paricinvantīti dhvaniḥ | ato yasya tat-prāp-
tīcchā vartate sa tata eva panthānaṁ paricinvatv ity
anudhvaniḥ |*

“O Lord, the way to reach you must first be heard from the guru; then it can be seen and directly realized. You then enter the lotus of our hearts by taking this path.’ The suggestion is that these devotees perfectly recognize the ways and means of the devotional path. The further suggestion is that if we wish



to attain the Supreme Lord, then we too must try to gain knowledge of that path."

Remember the words of the great authority Narottama Thakur:

guru-mukha-padma-vākya cittete kariyā aikya
āra nā kariha mane āśā
srī guru caraṇe rati, ei se uttama gati
je prasāde pūre sarva āśā

"Fix your mind on the words emanating from the lotus mouth of the spiritual master. Place your hopes in nothing else. Affection for the guru's lotus feet is the ultimate goal, for by his mercy all of one's aspirations are realized." (Narottama Das, *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*)

From faith in the words of the spiritual master, affection for his service increases. Someone who becomes a powerful preacher or learned writer but makes no effort to put the spiritual master's words into practice shows no actual love for him. The spiritual master can see through those who only make a show of affection for him and will surely crown with success the sincere attempts of the disciple who genuinely follows his directions. The guru is the personification of Lord Gaurāṅga's magnanimity, therefore he will mercifully transfer power or strength to his sincere disciple. With his blessings, the blessings of the Lord are not long to follow, for the mercy of the Lord comes through that of His intimate associates. *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādah.*

If we make no effort to seek out the blessings of the spiritual master, we may worship the Lord for millions of lifetimes without His ever becoming satisfied with us. Krishna Himself distributes His mercy to the living beings by taking the form of the spiritual master. For this reason, the Vedic scriptures have clearly stated that there is no means of attaining Krishna's blessings other than by following the spiritual master. The Upanishads have stated:

yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau

tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanah

"Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master, who is His manifestation and not different from Him, are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed." (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

My most worshipable Gurudeva, Srila Prabhupada, did not see the faults in anyone; he was most compassionate. We who aspire to become the servants of his servants and to partake of the remnants of his plate, pray to him with all the sincerity at our command that by his causeless mercy he will give us the worthiness to serve him. We pray to him to please make our hearts simple and free from deception; may he forgive us of our offenses, and consider us the servants of his servants, birth after birth. May he free us from the attractions and aversions of this world and keep us fixed in service to his lotus feet.

Raghunath Das lamented the disappearance of Srila Rupa Goswami with such intensity that stones could have melted. In Rupa's absence, he felt the entire land of Vraja to be completely empty: Govardhana was like a great python, Radha Kund the wide open mouth of a tiger, and he felt his own self to be void of life. Can we ordinary mortals imitate the eternal associates of the Lord in their feelings of separation?

Narottama Das Thakur also cried and prayed fervently to his diksha guru Lokanath Goswami to attain the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Goswami, who had actualised Srīman Mahāprabhu's heartfelt desires on this earth. Narottama Das sang that Sri Rupa was the worshipable object of his devotion, the treasure of his life, his jeweled ornament, the very source of his life, the perfection of his desire, the ocean of ecstatic feeling, his Vedic religion, his vow, his penance, his prayer and his duty. Rupa Goswami was everything to Narottama Thakur, and therefore he almost went mad out of his feelings of separation, crying day and night in the hope of receiving his mercy. If we could even feel a millionth part of what he did, our lives



The True Spirit of Separation

would be perfect; we would attain the greatest fortune. I do not know how many more lifetimes I will have to wait for this good fortune to be mine.

Devotion to the spiritual master is the only way to reach our Divine Lord. The spiritual master is the personal companion of Lord Krishna or Sri Gauranga; he is most dear to Him. Krishna Das Kaviraja writes:

*dikṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa
sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama
sei deha kare tāra cid-ānanda-maya
aprākṛta-dehe tāra carāṇa bhajaya*

“At the time of initiation, when a devotee surrenders to the spiritual master, Krishna makes him equal to Himself. He transforms the devotee’s body into spiritual substance; the devotee then worships the Lord in that spiritualized body.” (CC 3.4.192-3)

Krishna accepts us as a part of his own entourage to the extent that we surrender ourselves in body, mind and words to the spiritual master. He takes possession of us, as it were, transforming our bodies and making them spiritual so that we will be able to serve him directly. Krishna once embraced his friend Sudama and said,

*nanv artha-kovidā brahman
varṇāśramavatām iha
ye mayā guruṇā vācā
taranty aṅjo bhavāṇavam*

“O brahmin, of all people within the four orders and castes of Vedic society, are not the real knowers of value those who cross over the material ocean by taking shelter of My words, as taught by the spiritual master?” (SB 10.80.33)

*nāham iḥyā-prajātibhyām
tapasopāśamena ca
tuṣyeyam sarva-bhūtātmā
guru-śuśrūṣayā yathā*

“I, the soul of all beings, am not as pleased by the per-

formance of the prescribed duties of the four ashrams, i.e., sacrifices, service to the family, austerities and renunciation, as I am by service to the guru.” (SB 10.80.34)

When asked how love for God develops, Prahlād Maharaj told the other boys in his school: *guru-śuśrūṣayā bhaktyā sarva-labdhārpaṇena ca*, “through serving the guru, being devoted to him and by offering him all of one’s gains.” (SB 7.7.30) Srila Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur comments on this verse as follows:

*guroḥ śuśrūṣayā snapana-saṁvāhanādikayā tathā
sarveṣāṁ labdhānām vastūnām arpaṇena ca tac cārpaṇam
bhaktyaiva, na tu pratiṣṭhādīnā hetunā*

“Service to the guru means serving him through such things as bathing and massaging him; offering the guru all of one’s gains should be done with devotion and not out of personal motivations, such as the desire for personal prestige, etc.”

In the Bhagavatam, after telling Yudhisthira how to conquer over various character defects, Narada summarizes by saying:

*etat sarvaṁ gurau bhaktyā
puruṣo hy aṅjasā jayet*

“We can conquer over all these defects by rendering devotional service to the spiritual master.” (SB 7.15.25)

In other words, the only way to conquer over lust, anger, greed, fear, lamentation, bewilderment, pride, envy, the three miseries and the three modes of material nature is by surrendering to the spiritual master. But if a disciple thinks the spiritual master to be nothing more than an ordinary mortal, then all his spiritual practices and worship of the Lord are simply a wasted effort.

*yasya sāksād bhagavati
jñāna-dīpa-prade gurau
martyāsad-dhīḥ śrutam tasya
sarvaṁ kuñjara-śaucavat*



“We should consider the spiritual master to be directly the Supreme Lord because he bestows transcendental knowledge for our enlightenment. Consequently, for one who maintains the material conception that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being, everything is frustrated. His enlightenment and his Vedic studies and knowledge are all like the bathing of an elephant.” (SB 7.15.26)

In the commentary to this verse, Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur writes the following:

kim ca satyām bhūyasyām api bhaktau, gurau manuṣya-buddhitve sarvaṁ eva vyartham bhavatīty āha yasyeti | sāṅśād bhagavatīti bhagavad-aṁśa-buddhir api gurau na kāryeti bhāvaḥ | yad vā, upāśye bhagavatī eva sāṅśād-vidyamāne martyāśad-dhīḥ martya iti durbuddhis tasya śrutam bhagavan-mantrādikam śravaṇa-mananādikam ca vyartham ity arthaḥ |

“It is essential to note that even though someone engages in intense practices of devotion to the Lord, it is all useless if he thinks the spiritual master is an ordinary man. This is being pointed out in this verse. The words *sāṅśād bhagavatī* clearly indicate that one must think of the guru as the Supreme Lord Himself, and not even as a mere expansion of the Lord. [He, who is the source of all expansions and the object of all devotional service, has become incarnate in the form of a servant to Himself. This is expressed in the words of the *Gurvaṣṭaka*: *kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya* – “his identity with Krishna is due to his being most dear to Him.”] Alternatively, even if the Lord, the supreme object of worship, is personally present as the spiritual master, if one has the demented intelligence to think of him as an ordinary mortal, then whatever he has heard from him—the mantras received at the time of initiation or instructions on the scripture and devotional practice—cease to have any effect. This is the intention of this verse.”

Narada follows this statement by giving an example in the subsequent verse (7.15.27):

*eṣa vai bhagavān sāṅśāt
pradhāna-puruṣeśvaraḥ*

*yogeśvarair vimrgyāṅghrir
loko yaṁ manyate naram*

“The Supreme Person Sri Krishna personally appeared in this world. He is the supreme lord, the master of all the universes, and the master of yoga. His lotus feet are the ultimate goal of all life, yet the people of this world think of Him as an ordinary man.” (SB 7.15.27)

Though people may think of Krishna as an ordinary man, this does not make it an actuality. Similarly, a spiritual master’s parents, children or neighbors may see him as just another person, but a good disciple recognizes him as the visible manifestation of the Supreme Lord Himself.

Therefore, in the following two verses from the *Viṣṇu-smṛti* quoted in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, we are advised:

*na guror apriyam kuryāt
tāditaḥ pīḍito 'pi vā
nāvamanyeta tad-vākyam
nāpriyam hi samācaret*

“Never do anything unpleasant to your spiritual master, even if you are humiliated and beaten. Never disregard his words, and never act in a way that is displeasing to him.” (HBV 1.99, from *Viṣṇu-smṛti*)

*ācāryasya priyam kuryāt
prāṇair api dhanair api
karmaṇā manasā vācā
sa yāti paramām gatim*

“Do things that are pleasing to your spiritual master with your life and your wealth, with your work, your thoughts and your speech, and you will go to the supreme destination.” (HBV 1.100, from *Viṣṇu-smṛti*)

It is never appropriate to criticize the words or deeds of the spiritual master by saying things like, “My spiritual master should not have said that, or it was improper for him to have done some particular thing.” By doing so, we reveal our mundane concept of the guru and ultimately we become offensive by



showing disrespect to him. This is the offense known as *gurv-avajñā*.

The orders of the spiritual master are to be obeyed diligently without reserve or delay—*ājñā gurūṇām hy avicāraṇīyā*. If one is incapable of following his orders, then one should fall down at his feet and pray to him with urgency for the strength and ability to do so. If the spiritual master rebukes or condemns the disciple, the disciple should still not attempt to make his case heard, even though it may be painful to listen in silence. If the disciple argues with the spiritual master, it is counted as the offense of disrespecting the guru. The disciple thus becomes unteachable and, due to his independence, falls down into indiscipline and wantonness, inevitably resulting in suffering.

Six kinds of unsatisfactory disciples are described in the scriptures:

*alir bāṇo jyotiṣakah
stabdhībhūtaḥ kimekakah
preṣita-preṣakaś caiva
saḍ ete sevakādhamāḥ*

“These six are the ‘bee’ (*ali*), so called because of his fickleness; the *bāṇa*, who talks back, piercing his master like an arrow; the procrastinator (*jyotiṣaka*); the servant who is lazy and inactive (*stabdhībhūta*); the one who refuses to try to do anything on his own (*kimekaka*), and the one who passes the buck (*preṣita-preṣaka*).”

All such unsatisfactory disciples (*sevakādhamas*) demonstrate an ignorance of the spiritual master’s divine nature by their lackadaisical attitude to service. They thus end up as offenders to the spiritual master and the Holy Name. Any disciple who wishes to attain perfection in the spiritual practices given him by his spiritual master must pay careful attention not to offend him in this way.

In the 17th *vilāsa* of the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, the two following verses are quoted from the *Agastya-saṁhitā*, describing the five-step *puraścaraṇa* rite

that is recommended for a disciple who wishes to attain perfection in the mantra after initiation:

*pūjā traikālikī nityam
japas tarpaṇam eva ca
homa brāhmaṇa-bhuktiś ca
puraścaraṇam ucyate*

*guror labdhasya mantrasya
prasādena yathāvidhī
pañcāṅgopāśanam siddhyai
puraś caitad vidhiyate*

“There are five aspects to the *puraścaraṇa* observance: *pūjā* three times a day, morning, noon and evening, constant chanting of japa, oblations of water, daily fire sacrifice and feeding of the brahmins. In order to attain perfection in the mantra that was given at the time of initiation, it is enjoined that the disciple should first perform these five kinds of worship according to the regulations. This is why it is called *puraś* (‘before’) *carana* (‘performing’).” (HBV 17.11-12)

The discussion of *puraścaraṇa* is continued in the same chapter of the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. According to the Āgamas, the *puraścaraṇa* gives energy or power to the mantra. Just as an embodied being without strength is impotent and useless, so is a mantra that has never been enlivened by the performance of *puraścaraṇa*. Even if one should chant the mantra or perform other religious rituals for hundreds of years, he will never attain perfection in the chanting without *puraścaraṇa*.

The basic idea behind the *puraścaraṇa* is to chant a certain, fixed number of mantras. Then one also performs one-tenth that number of oblations into the sacrificial fire, one-tenth of that number of oblations into water, and feeds one-tenth that number of brahmins. There is some difference of opinion about the number of oblations to be offered into water, as some say that it should be one-tenth the number of mantras chanted. Whatever the case, the rules are so stringent that it is extremely difficult for an ordinary person in this Age of Kali to complete such a vow.



And if there is a disruption in the performance and any single part of the rule is not perfectly carried out, then one has to double the number of mantras and all the other parts of the vow. Therefore, the merciful Lord gives the possibility of an alternative.

*athavā devatā-rūpaṁ
guruṁ dhyātvā pratoṣayet
tasya cchāyānusārī syād
bhakti-yuktena cetasā*

*guru-mūlam idaṁ sarvaṁ
tasmān nityaṁ guruṁ bhajet
puraścaraṇa-hīno 'pi
mantrī siddhyen na saṁśayaḥ*

“Alternatively, one should simply satisfy the guru by meditating on him in the form of the deity. He should think of himself as devotedly following the guru like a shadow. One should constantly worship the guru who is the basis of all of one's spiritual activities. Even if one does not perform the *puraścaraṇa*, one can attain perfection in chanting the mantra through service to the guru. Of this there can be no doubt.” (HBV 17.241-2)

*yathā siddha-rasa-sparśāt
tāmraṁ bhavati kāñcanam
sannidhānād guror eva
śiṣyo viṣṇumayo bhavet*

For as it is said, “Just as copper becomes gold through the touch of specially treated mercury, so does a disciple take on the qualities of Vishnu through the association of his guru.” (HBV 17.243)

Sanatan Goswami comments on these verses in the following way: *kevala-śrī-guru-prasādenaiva puraścaraṇa-siddhiḥ syād iti prakārāntaram āha athaveti tribhiḥ*

“Perfection of the *puraścaraṇa* can be achieved simply by achieving the satisfaction of the spiritual master. These three verses have been quoted as evidence in that regard.”

Furthermore, it is said that none of the other pre-

liminary purificatory rituals such as *puraścaraṇa* are needed in order to attain perfection in the eighteen syllable *Gopāla-mantra*:

*śrīmad-gopāla-mantra 'yaṁ
naiva kiñcid apekṣate
hṛn-mātra-sprk phalaty eva
sprṣto hi dahano yathā*

“This divine *Gopāla-mantra*, however, depends on nothing at all. As soon as it touches the devotee's heart it brings results, just as fire burns everything that it touches.” (HBV 17.260)

Sanatan Goswami has also commented on this verse as follows: *te copāyā mantrāntareṣv eva, na tasmin mohanākhyāṣṭādaśākṣara-mantra iti likhati śrīmad iti | kiñcit saṁskārādikaṁ | kintu hṛnmātraṁ sprṣatīti tathā sann api phalaty eva | tatra dṛṣṭāntatvenārthāntaram upanyasyati sprṣto hīti | yathākathañcit sparśa-mātreṇa dahano haded eva tacchakters tathātvād iti bhāvaḥ |*

“Lord Shiva listed seven different ritual procedures (*drāvaṇa*, etc.) needed to perfect the mantra (HBV 1.226), but these are intended for mantras other than the eighteen-syllable *Gopāla-mantra*, also named *mohana*. This mantra has merely to touch the heart of the sadhaka in order to bear fruit. In the verse, another subject is introduced in order as an example: just as fire needs only the slightest contact in order to burn, so too this king of mantras is naturally endowed with full, perfect powers.”

Of course, it should be borne in mind that the mantra does require one to take shelter of a spiritual master and to render him service.

In the story of Krishna and His friend Sudama found in the tenth canto, Krishna tells His guru Sandipani Muni:

*iyad eva hi sac-chiṣyaiḥ
kartavyaṁ guru-niṣkṛtam
yad vai viśuddha-bhāvena
sarvārthātmārpaṇaṁ gurau*



“The principal duty of a sincere disciple is to repay the spiritual master for all that he has been given. This service to the guru should be performed with a pure attitude, giving everything of value that he possesses, including his very self.”
(SB 10.80.41, HBV 2.112)

Sanatan Goswami writes in the *Digdarśinī* that *niṣkṛtam* refers to the way one releases oneself from an obligation by doing something or making a gift in payment. In view of one's debt to the guru, one should give everything that he possess up to and including his very own soul.

We find the following statement in the same chapter of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*:

*guruṁ ca bhagavad-dṛṣṭyā
parikramya praṇamya ca
dattvoktāṁ dakṣiṇāṁ tasmai
sva-śarīraṁ samarpayet*

“Seeing the spiritual master as a manifestation of the Lord Himself, one should circumambulate him and bow to him. He should then give him *dakṣiṇā* according to the scriptures, offering his very own body.”
(HBV 2.111)

Sanatan clarifies that “according to the scriptures, the *dakṣiṇā* should be given according to one's capacity, either half, a quarter or a tenth of one's wealth. The gifts of wealth should be given before initiation for the pleasure of the spiritual master; the sacrifice of the body should come after receiving the mantra.”

The fact is that no one can be free of his debt to the spiritual master, even if he gives him everything he owns. A rich householder may make a show of giving opulent gifts, but this is not the real *dakṣiṇā*, for Krishna says to Uddhava in the Bhagavatam (SB 11.19.39): *dakṣiṇā jñāna-sandēśaḥ*—the real gift to the spiritual master is to teach others what one has received from him.

In his commentary to these words, Visvanath

Chakravarti Thakur writes the following: “Here the word *jñāna* means that after experiencing the spiritual joy of kīrtan, etc., one instructs one's own friends and relatives about his realizations. This is the real gift to the spiritual master and not donations of wealth, clothing or whatever (*utsavānte yat kīrtanādirasānubhavasya sandēśaḥ sveṣṭa-mitreṣu jñāpanaiva dakṣiṇā na tu dhana-vastrādy-arpanam*).”

Therefore, instructing one's acquaintances and others in the knowledge of *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana* taught by the spiritual master according to their capacities is the genuine *guru-dakṣiṇā*. This means that one must first strictly follow the appropriate spiritual practices, seriously engaging in *bhajan*. Unless one has exemplary behavior, he cannot hope to acquire the qualifications to preach the spiritual master's message effectively. This means that he will not be able to give the spiritual master the requisite gifts that follow initiation and instruction. The spiritual master is the manifest representation of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu's message. Mahāprabhu said:

*jāre dekha tāre kaha kṛṣṇa-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra ei deśa*

“Teach everyone you see this message of devotion to Krishna. On my command, become a guru and deliver this land.” (CC 2.7.128)

*bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya janma jāra
janma sārthaka kari kara para-upakāra*

“Whoever has taken a human birth in the land of India should make his life successful and engage in welfare work for others.” (CC 1.9.41)

If we take these instructions seriously and do everything we can to realize them, then we will one day become capable of giving the spiritual master the gift that he desires above all others. The spiritual master will be pleased and transmit unlimited power to the disciple with whom he is pleased.

To the extent that we serve the spiritual master with



sincerity and repeat his teachings, through the association with his words, our hearts will cry out with the desire for the good fortune to be associated with him by directly seeing, touching and serving him directly. Only then will we be able to understand the true spirit of separation. We will then know that he is Radharani's personal associate who, in the form of Nayanamani Manjari has entered Radha and Govinda's eternal pastimes and is there immersed in the ocean of service to the Divine Couple. When we feel this mood of separation, the desire to dedicate our lives for attaining this service will awaken. "The spiritual master, who has given me the eyes to see the true purpose of life, is my master birth after birth" (*caṣṣu-dāna dila je, janme janme prabhu se*). He is our lord and master lifetime after lifetime. We pray that he will be merciful and transform us lowly creatures by giving us the strength to put his message into practice and to preach that message, and then when the time of death comes, he will take us back to his lotus feet, making us his own for eternity.

Being distanced from the spiritual master is a source of great pain. We pray that Srila Prabhupada will give us a place at his lotus feet even though we are the most unworthy servants of his servants, so that we may be able to render service to the Divine Couple according to his direction and by following his example. Our only authority to make such an audacious prayer is that we have taken the remnants of his servants' food. We know that we have no right to make such a request of you, but to whom can we turn other than you, our spiritual master? By your grace, everything that would ordinarily be impossible becomes possible in a moment. Though today all our efforts are nothing but a joke, like those of a dwarf who tries to touch the moon, are your blessings not capable of effecting any miracle? Will they not give us a love for chanting the Holy Names without offense? Has Bhaktivinoda Thakur not sung of the power of the Holy Name to give us the realization of our eternal spiritual identity?

*iṣat vikaṣi punaḥ dekhāya nija-rūpa-guṇa
citta hari laya kṛṣṇa pāṣa*

*pūrṇa vikaṣita hañā vraje more jāya lañā
dekhāya nija svarūpa vilāsa*

"When the Name is even slightly revealed, it shows me my own spiritual form and characteristics. It steals my mind and takes it to Krishna's side. When the Name is fully revealed, it takes me directly to Vraja, where it shows me my personal role in the eternal pastimes."

(Kṛṣṇa-nāma dhare kata bala? Śaraṇāgati)

Thus, by the blessing of the spiritual master, we will be able to receive the mercy of the Holy Name and then, all perfections will come through the Holy Name as Mahaprabhu Himself promised: *iḥā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra*.

Rupa Goswami feelingly prayed to the Lord in his song, *Deva bhavantam vande*:

*bhaktir udañcati yady api
mādhava na tvayi mama tilamātrī
parameśvaratā tad api tavā-
dhika-durghaṭa-ghaṭana-vidhātṛ*

"O Madhava, I do not have a sesame seed's worth of devotion for You. Even so, the proof of Your supreme glory is that you can make even the impossible possible [and make me worthy of You]." And we must not forget that Krishna's mercy follows that of His living manifestation in the world—His representative, the spiritual master: *guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā kar-ena bhakta-gaṇe*. For this reason we pray to Srila Prabhupada with the words, *śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti-vigrahāya namo'stu te*—"Obeisance to you, the embodiment of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu's compassionate power."

In His teachings to Srila Sanatan Goswami, Mahaprabhu said,

*kṛṣṇa jadi kṛpā kare kono bhāgyavāne
guru-antaryāmī-rūpe śikhāya āpane*

"When Krishna shows His mercy to any fortunate



individual, He teaches him from without as the greatly advanced devotee who acts as the spiritual master and from within as the indwelling Supersoul, also known as the *caitanya-guru*.”

(See CC 1.1.45-48 and 2.22.47-8)

When Krishna gives His mercy as the *caitanya-guru*, then He gives the kind of firm and pure intelligence through which the devotee gains expertise in bhajan, or *sāsaṅga-bhajana*. Externally, the *mahānta-guru* gives initiation in the mantra and instruction in the practice of bhajan to the disciple who takes shelter of him. No one can advance or attain perfection in bhajan without serving the spiritual master with faith (*viśrambhena guroḥ sevā*). The word *viśrambha* means faith, affection and love. It thus refers to the kind of submissive questioning and surrender as well as the affectionate service mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita's famous verse summarizing the disciple's dealings with the spiritual master. One who acts in this way quickly becomes worthy of receiving the spiritual master's blessings and in due time learns in detail about the three categories of divine knowledge, namely *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*.

Service to the guru in affection and love is possible both in this world and the next. The spiritual master is always participating in the eternally pure realm and is never under the thrall of birth and death in this world. One should never think of him as an ordinary mortal. By serving his teachings when he is no longer visible to our mundane eyes, we can get a vision of his transcendental form. Just like the Supreme Lord, the guru knows what is to be known, including all of us, but he is not known to anyone (*sa vetti vedyam na ca tasyāsti vettā*). We cannot know him through our own power; it is only when he mercifully decides to reveal himself to us that we will achieve the great fortune of being able to see him. Therefore, the famous saying, *guru-kṛpā hi kevalam* (“the spiritual master's blessings are our only salvation”) is appropriate.

My dear spiritual master! I am completely lacking in knowledge. I am the lowliest miscreant, but I strive

to be the servant of your servant. Please forgive whatever offenses I may have committed, consciously or unconsciously. Give me shelter at your lotus feet and the right to serve them. You are the best of the followers of Srila Rupa Goswami, so I pray to you in the same way that Srila Narottama Das Thakur did to Rupa Prabhu in his *Prārthanā*:

śuniyāchi sādhu-mukhe bale sarva-jana
 śrī-rūpa-kṛpāya mile yugala-carāṇa
 śrī-rūpera kṛpā jena āmā prati haya
 se-pada āśraya jāra sei mahāśaya
 hā hā prabhupāda kabe sange laiya jābe
 śrī-rūpera pāda-padme more samarpibe
 mano-vāñchā siddhi tabe hañ pūrṇa tṛṣṇa
 hethāya caitanya mile sethā rādhā-kṛṣṇa
 tumi nā karile dayā ke karibe āra
 manera vāsanā pūrṇa kara ei bāra
 e tina saṁsāre mora āra keha nāi
 kṛpā kari nija-pada-tale deha thāni
 rādhā-kṛṣṇa-līlā-guṇa gāñ rātra-dine
 e adhama-vāñchā-pūrṇa nahe tuwā bine
 dayāmaya prabhu tumi dayā kara more
 rādhā-kṛṣṇa-carāṇa jena sadā citte sphure

“I have heard from the sadhus—indeed, everyone says that you can attain the lotus feet of the Divine Couple through the blessings of Sri Rupa. When will Rupa Goswami's mercy fall upon me? When will Prabhupada, who has taken shelter of those lotus feet take me with him and offer me up to Srila Rupa Goswami? My heart's desire will be realized and my thirst quenched. In this world I will meet Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and in the other, Radha and Krishna. Who else but you, Prabhu, will be able to help me in this way? Fulfill my desires this time. In these three worlds, I have nobody else but you. Be merciful and give me a place under your lotus feet. Let me sing the glories of Radha and Krishna's pastimes, day and night. Without you, this lowly creature's desires will never be fulfilled. O Master! You alone are compassionate; please be merciful towards me and help me remember Radha and Krishna at every moment.”

O Gurudeva, may my mind always repose in the shade of your lotus feet—*mama matir āstām tava pada-kamale*.

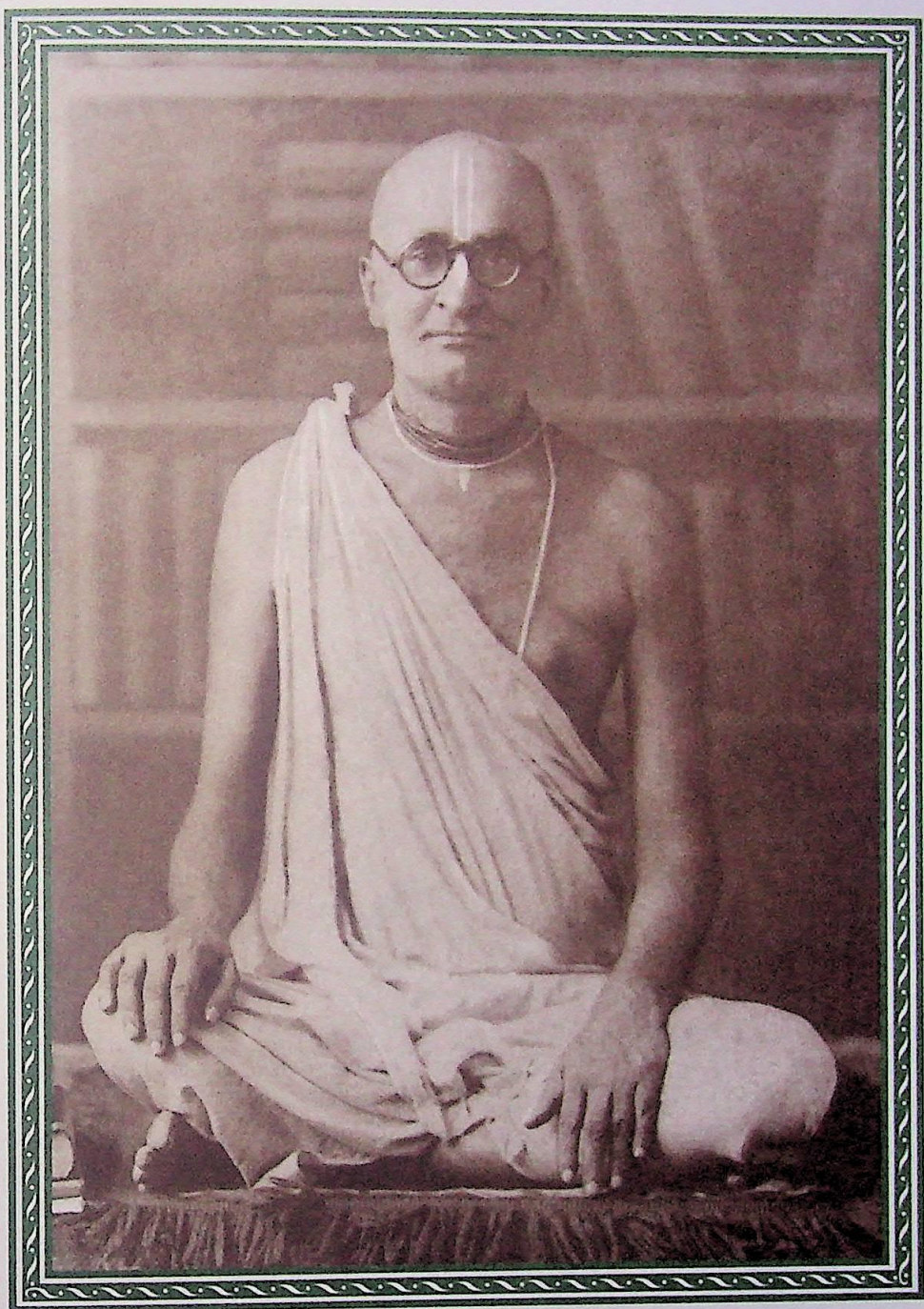


Of Love & Separation

shade of your lotus feet—*mama matir āstām tava
pada-kamale.*

[This article first appeared in *Chaitanya Vāṇī*, 13.11,
(Dec. 1974), pp. 236-45]





*"In the surrendered heart, the eternally manifested truth of the transcendental world
will spontaneously reveal itself."*

His Last Instructions

Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur ended his sojourn amongst the mortals of this world on Thursday, January 1, 1936, at 5:30 in the morning. A week prior to his disappearance, on December 23, Prabhupada gave a number of significant instructions to the disciples who came to see him. These were compiled and published in issues 23 and 24 of the 15th volume of the weekly Gauḍīya magazine. These issues were dedicated to the disappearance of Srila Prabhupada. I have tried here to give these instructions in verse form.

*sakale parama utsāha sahakāre
rūpa raghunātha vānī pracāra sabāra*

All of you preach the message of Rupa and Raghunath to everyone with great enthusiasm.

*rūpānuga-pada-dhuli haite sabāra
(jena) carama ākāṅkṣā citte jāge anibāra*

May the ultimate desire to become a speck of dust at the lotus feet of the followers of Sri Rupa remain ever awake in our hearts.

*advaya-jñāna-tattva vraje vrajendra-nandana
(mūla)-viśaya-vigraha sei sarva-sevya-dhana*

Vrajendranandan Krishna is the principle of non-dual consciousness. He is the root object of devotion and the treasured object of service for all.

*tānra aprākṛta indriya tarpaṇa uddēse
āśrayānugatyē sabe thāka mile miśe*

In order to satisfy the transcendental senses of the one, non-dual supreme truth, remain united in following Radha, the original reservoir of love for Him.

*sabāra uddesya eka śrī-hari-bhajana
tāhā sādhibāre sabe karaha jatana*

Everyone make the effort to perfect your worship of Sri Hari; make this the only purpose of your lives.

*du' dinera jāni ei anitya-saṁsāra
ihāte mamatā tyaji hao māyā-pāra*

Remember that this world is temporary and lasts only a day or two. Give up your family attachment and transcend this world of illusion.

*kona-rūpe jīvana nirvāha kari cala
nitya-tattva kṛṣṇa-bhakti karaha sambala*

Maintain your worldly obligations in whatever way you can, but make the eternal principle, devotion to Krishna, the true provision for your voyage through life.

*vipad gañjanā śata śata se lāñchanā
āsuk tathāpi hari-bhajana chero nā*

Let hundreds of dangers, insults or persecutions come, but despite them, do not give up your worship of Krishna.

*sarva-vighna-vināśana prabhu gaura-hari
avaśya śrī-pade sthāna dibena dayā kari*

Lord Gaura Hari destroys all obstacles on the path. He will surely be merciful and give you a place at His lotus feet.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-vimukha heri adhikāṁśa jana
śuddha-kṛṣṇa-sevā-kathā nā kare grahaṇa
hayo nā utsāha-hīna tāhāte kakhana
chero nā jīvātu tava nijera bhajana*



When you see that most people are indifferent to Sri Krishna and show no interest in the selfless service to Krishna and in talks about Him, don't be discouraged. Most of all, never give up your bhajan, your life and soul.

*nija sarvasva kṛṣṇa-kathā śravaṇa-kīrtana
chāriyā dāridrya kena kariḇe varaṇa*

Why would you accept the poverty of a life without hearing and chanting about Krishna, your sole wealth?

*kṛṣṇa-pāda-padma māga jivera kalyāṇa
acire purāḇe vāñchā sarva-śaktimān*

Beg for Krishna's lotus feet, the ultimate benediction for all living beings. The Lord is all-powerful and will quickly fulfill your desire.

*asamartha nahe kṛṣṇa dhare sarva-bala
(kṛṣṇa-)sevakera vāñchā kabhu nā haya viphalā*

Krishna is not incapable. He is omnipotent and His servants' desires never go in vain.

*tṛṇāpekṣā hīna dīna āpane mānibe
taru-sama sahya-guṇa bhūṣita haibe
amānī mānada haye sadā nāma labe
śrī-nāma-bhajane sarva-pradhāna jānibe*

Please always chant the name of the Lord, being humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than the tree. Give all respect to others and demand none for yourself. Make the worship of the Holy Name the most important aspect of your devotional life.

*śrī-caitanya-pravartita saṅkīrtana-yajña
ihāte laiṇā dīkṣā bhajibena vijña*

A wise person will worship the Lord after taking initiation in the sacrifice of the Holy Name inaugurated by Sri Krishna Chaitanya and His associates.

*sapta-śikha nāma yajñānale ātmāhuti
viśeṣe kalite ei śāstrera jukati*

Offer yourself up into the seven flames of this sacrificial fire. The scriptures say that this especially is the religious principle in the Age of Kali.

*karma-vīra dharma-vīra haye kāja nāi
jñāna-yoga-tapa-ādi pathe kaṣṭa pāi*

We do not seek to become heroes performing great works or religious deeds. We will become distressed if we take up the paths of knowledge, works or austerities.

*śrī-rūpera pada-dhūli jānaha svarūpa
sei se sarvasva tāhe nā hao virūpa*

Know that your true identity is to be a speck of dust at the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Prabhu; don't go against this identity, which is your treasure.

*rūpānuga-varya hana śrī-bhaktivinoda
se bhaktivinoda-dhārāya bahe śuddha moda*

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur is the best of all the followers of Sri Rupa Goswami. The pure joy of devotional service comes in the stream that started with him.

*bhakti-rasāmṛta-pūrṇa sei pūta dhārā
kakhano habe nā ruddha śata-vighna dvārā*

That stream is holy and full of the nectarean flavors of devotion. Even a hundred obstacles shall never obstruct it.

*se dhārāya haiṇā snāta buddhimān jana
bhaktivinoda-mano'bhīṣṭa karaha pūraṇa*

Intelligent persons who have bathed in the waters of this stream should endeavor to fulfill the heartfelt wishes of Bhaktivinoda Thakur.

*bahu yogya kṛtī-vyakti āchaha tomarā
hao sabe āguvān esa kari tvarā*

Amongst you are many capable and worthy individuals. So all of you come forward and quickly take up this task.



His Last Instructions

*dante tṛṇa dhari ei jāci punaḥ punaḥ
śrī-rūpa-pada-dhūli jena hai janma janma*

Taking grass between my teeth, I pray repeatedly that I may become a speck of dust at Sri Rupa Goswami's lotus feet, birth after birth.

*ihā vinā anyākāṅkṣā nahuka hydaye
ei vāñchā sarva-hṛde hauk udaye*

Other than this, I pray that no other desire will ever manifest in my or anyone else's heart.

*e saṁsāre thākā-kāle āche nānā bādhā
tāhe muhyamān kabhu nahibe sarvathā*

While living in the world, we encounter many difficulties; but there is no need for us to ever be bewildered by these difficulties.

*bādhā mātra dūra karāi nahe prayojana
ataḥpara kibā labhya cinte vijñā-jana*

We need make no effort to remove any of these obstacles. What is necessary for us, while we are still here, is to learn what is beyond—what will be the nature of our eternal life.

*nitya-ātmā āmi mora nitya sei jīvana
ekhani hauk tāra tattva-nirdhāraṇa*

Let me realize at this very moment the nature of my eternal spiritual identity and my eternal life in the spiritual world.

*ākaraṇa-vikaraṇera vastu āche jata
cāhi vā nā cāhi emana kahiba vā kata*

There are so many things that attract and repel us. There is no end to the things that we want and don't want.

*ei duhuṁ mīmāṁsā śighra kari matimān
nitya-tattva kṛṣṇa-bhakti karaha sandhāna*

We have to resolve exactly what we do or do not

want and decide to search out devotional service to Krishna, the eternal truth.

*o duwera yuddhe jādī jāyī hate cāo
(tābe) aprākṛta nāmākṛṣṭa hale rakṣā pāo*

If you wish to conquer over attractions and repulsions then you should remember that by becoming attracted to the transcendental Holy Name, you will be delivered from them.

*kṛṣṇa-sevā rasa-kathā tābe ta bujhibe
tuccha saba rasa prati gṛhṇā upajibe*

Then you will understand the nature of service to Krishna and the taste of His divine topics. Then you will feel nothing but disgust for the other insignificant pleasures of this world.

*kṛṣṇānuśīlana jata vardhita haibe
(jāra) viśaya-pipāsā tata kamite thākibe*

As you increase cultivating your consciousness of Krishna, your thirst for material sense objects will decrease.

*baṛa-i kathina tattva kṛṣṇa-kathā haya
āpāta camaka-prada jaṭilārtha-maya*

The philosophy of Krishna consciousness is very perplexing. At first it seems startling and full of complex details.

*nāmī hate tānra nāma adhika karuṇa
āśraya laile tattva karena jñāpana*

The Holy Name is more compassionate than the Lord of the Name Himself. If one takes shelter of the Name, then it unravels all these philosophical complexities.

*nitya-prayojana modera kṛṣṇa-prema-dhana
tāhā anubhave kāmā bādhe sarva-kṣāna*

The treasure of love for Krishna is the eternal goal of our lives. At every moment, personal desires inter-



fere with our realizing it.

*nāmāśraye sei bādhā haya apanīta
kṛṣṇa-prema-rājye vāsa haya abhīpsita*

By taking shelter of the Holy Name, all these obstacles are removed and we can obtain the fulfillment of our true desire, to dwell in the realm of pure love of Krishna.

*e jagate keha nahe anurāga-pātra
athavā virāga-pātra nahe aṇumātra*

In this world no one is the special object of my affection, nor do I have the slightest hostility toward anyone.

*sakala vyavasthā ethā kṣaṇa-sthāyī haya
ethā-kāra lābhālābha vicārārha naya*

Whatever arrangements we make here in this world are momentary. There is no need to waste time thinking about gain or loss here.

*sabākāra labhya sei eka prayojana
śrī-kṛṣṇa-padāravinde prema mahādhana*

The only thing anyone should strive for is the one supreme goal of life. That is the great treasure of love for Krishna's lotus feet.

*tad-uddeśya sabe mili hao yatnavān
eka-dhyāna eka-jñāna hao eka-tāna*

So, join together all of you and strive for this goal. Work together harmoniously, with a single thing in mind and a single understanding.

*ekoddeśya aikatāne avasthita hao
mūlāśraya-vigraha-sevāya adhikāra lao*

Working together with the same purpose, you will become qualified for the service of Radharani, the original reservoir of love for Krishna.

*rūpānuga-cintā-srota hok pravāhita
tā hate svātantrya kabhu nahe samihita*

May the stream of ideas promoted by Rupa Goswami and his followers ever flow. We must never try to be independent of his doctrine.

*sapta-jihva nāma-saṅkīrtana-yajña prati
kakhano virāga jena nā haya arati*

May we never become indifferent or disinterested in the sacrifice of the Holy Name with its fire of seven flames.

*ekāntānurāga tāhe thāke vardhamāna
tabe ta sarvārtha-siddhi pūrṇa manaskāma*

In the performance of sankirtan, if your single-minded devotion goes on increasing, then all your desires will be fulfilled and all your goals achieved.

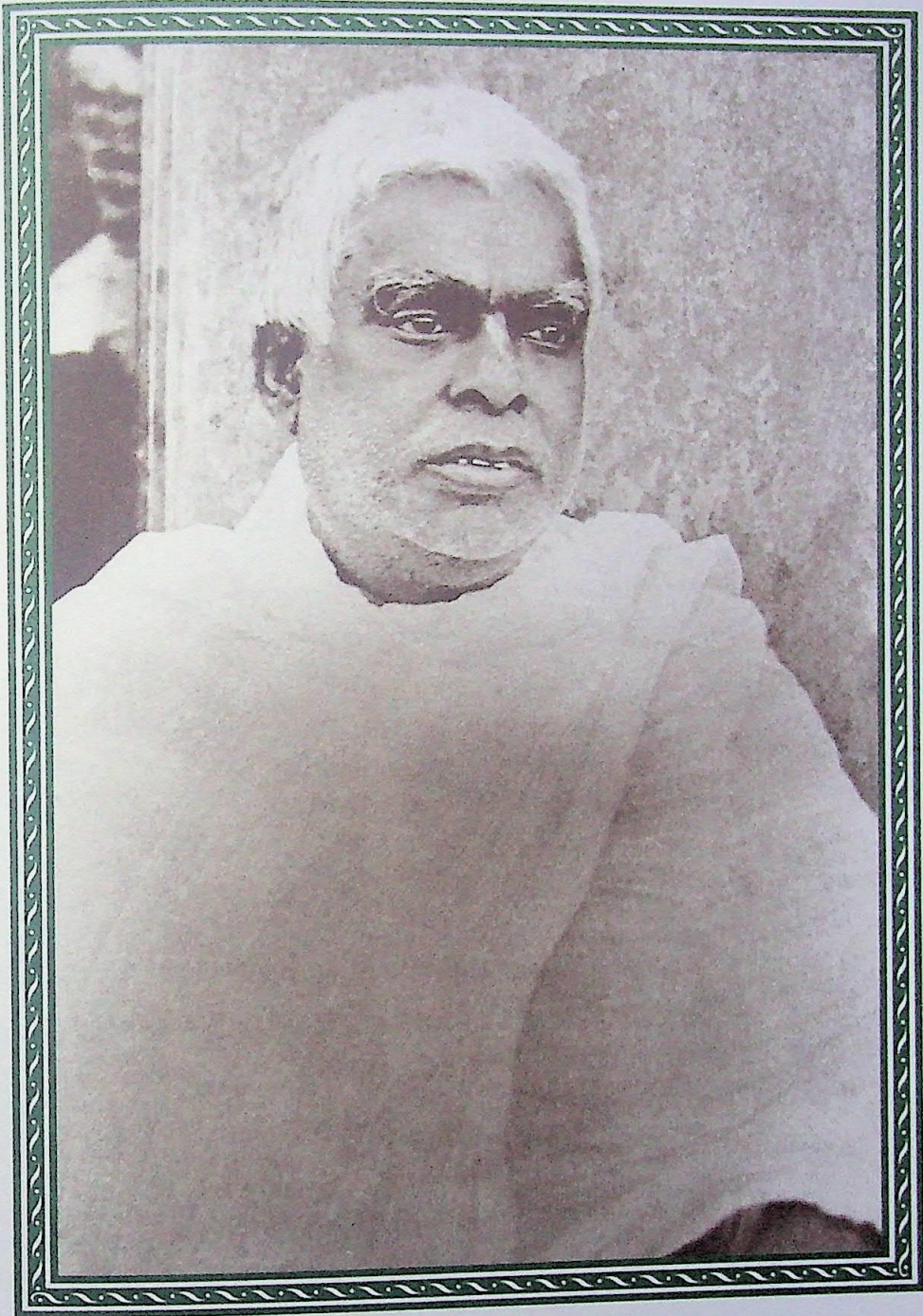
*śrī-rūpānuga janera pāda-padma dhara
ekānta bhāvetē tāndera ānugatyā kara*

Take hold of the feet of the followers of Sri Rupa Goswami and follow them with exclusive commitment.

*(śrī)-rūpa-raghunātha-kathā parama-utsāhe
nirbhaye pracāra kara sarva-siddhi jāhe*

Preach the message of Sri Rupa and Raghunath fearlessly and with great enthusiasm. Through this preaching, you will attain all perfection.

[This article first appeared in *Chaitanya Vāṇī*, 7.12 (Jan. 1968)]



Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur

Remembering His Lotus Feet

A song of separation to Prabhupada's lotus feet

sudīrgha trīṁśad-varṣa haila atīta
śrī-guru-carāṇa-sevā hainu vañcīta
tathāpi kena vā dhari e chāra parāṇa
e adhanya dina kena nahe avasāna

Thirty long years have now gone by since I was deprived of service to my spiritual master's lotus feet. I am still alive, but I do not know why I have not given up living when my life has become so meaningless.

āmāra kalyāṇa lāgi prabhu kata dina
śunālena kata kathā haye snehādīna
akṛtajña narādhama hāya ki kathina
hṛdaya āmāra tāhe hainu udāsīna

How often my master would spend time talking affectionately to me about Krishna! Even so, I am still so ungrateful and my heart so hard that I remain indifferent to all his teachings.

āvirbhāva tirobhāva mātra duṭṭi dina
satīrtha-sabhāya hai vacane pravīṇa
bhāṣāya tānhāra prati jānāi viraha
antare svendriya-prīti-vāñchā aharahaḥ

Only on the days of his appearance and disappearance do I make great speeches in gatherings of my own godbrothers. In my words I speak of feelings of separation, but my day-to-day life is ruled by the desire for my own sense pleasure.

śrī-guru-mahimā-saha jathā sumilana
sutīvra viraha tathā haya uddīpana

(kintu) ubhayatra seva-buddhi rahe sujāgrata
varam virahe sevāra vṛddhi dvi-guṇita

I feel my separation so intensely when we join together to glorify our spiritual master. Though we may desire to serve the spiritual master both in this world and the next, the intensity of this desire doubles when we are in separation from him.

śrī-guru-gaurāṅga mano'bhīṣṭa sthāpibāre
śiṣyera hṛdaye ārti jāge tivrākāre
bhāṣaṇe lekhanī-mukhe tāhāi prakāśi
kārye han tat-para ālasya vināśi

Separation calls into the disciple's heart a deep anxiety to fulfill the desires of Sri Guru and Gaurāṅga. As I speak about this in my speeches and writings, I become inspired to overcome my lethargy and dedicate myself to that purpose.

(prabhupāda) sutīvra vairāgya cāturmāsya vrata-cari
śata-koṭi mahāmantra japa pūrṇa kari
ācāra pracārādarsa ki mahā ujjvala
sthāpilena prabhu mora bhulinu sakala

Srila Prabhupada performed the Chaturmasya vows with intense renunciation and completed his vow to chant a billion Names of japa. His example of preaching and practicing was brilliant, yet I have forgotten it all.

aprakṛta-kāle saba śiṣya sambodhiyā
kahe prabhu kata āṅkhi nirete bhāsiyā
prabhu antardhāna saṅge saṅge sei saba
bhulinu sakali hāya se vāṇi vaibhava

At the time of his disappearance, my Prabhu called



all his disciples together and spoke to them with tears flowing from his eyes. As soon as he disappeared, however, I became blind to the powerful teachings he gave us on that occasion.

śrī-guru-gaurāṅga-candra virahe kātara
bhaktera ki bhāve kāte dina nirantara
prabhu-nāma-guṇa-līlā-śravaṇa-kīrtane
avirāma jala-dhārā bahe du'nyane

How do the devotees manage to survive when overwhelmed by separation from Guru and Gauranga? While singing and hearing their names, qualities and pastimes, tears run ceaselessly down their cheeks.

tānra dikṣā-śikṣā-sāra kariyā cayana
parama jatane tāhā kareṇa pālana
bhakti anukūla jāhā kareṇa grahaṇa
bhakti pratikūla bhāva dena visarjana

They reflect upon all Srila Prabhupada's philosophical teachings and instructions about devotional practice and take great care to follow them. They accept whatever is favorable to devotional service and reject all that is unfavorable.

anya abhilāṣa āra karma-yoga-jñāna
avimīśra ānukūlye kṛṣṇānuśīlana
haya bhakty-uttama ei prabhu-śikṣā-sāra
anurāgi bhakta-jana ihā kaṇṭha-hāra

They give up all other desires and the practices of karma, yoga or jnana. They engage in unmixed devotion, culturing consciousness of Krishna with a favorable attitude. This is the topmost bhakti, the essence of our Lord's teaching. The truly loving devotees cultivate this conception, placing it like a garland around their necks.

prabhura anuśāsana kichu nā māninu
tānra śiṣya kule hāya kulāṅgāra hainu
śrī-guru-carāṇe nāhi dṛḍha śraddhā-bhakti
mukhete dekhāi śudhu guru anurakti

I have not accepted any of Srila Prabhupada's disci-

pline; I have become a black sheep amongst his disciples. Having no faith and devotion for my spiritual master, I simply make a show of attachment to him.

prabhupāda aprakāṣa līlā pūrva-dine
śrī-carāṇe sevā-kāle kātara parāṇe
o duṭi rājīva-pade bakṣe dhare tuli
kendechinu tava cira dāsa kara bali

On the day before Srila Prabhupada's disappearance from this world, I was engaged in his service with a tormented heart. I held his two lotus feet on my chest and cried, "Make me your eternal servant!"

śrī aṅga samādhi kāle śrī dhāma-māyāpure
āro kata kāndilām bhāsi ānkhī nīre
bhāṣaṇe likhena kata karinu vilāpa
sakali ki habe tāhā unmāda pralāpa

How much more I cried while his body was being placed in samadhi in Sri Mayapur Dham. Since then I have written and spoken so many things in my desperation, but what good will come of all this mad ranting?

uṭhibe nā prāṇa kende prabhu-sevā-tare
ekhano ki acetana raba moha ghore
avicāre guru-ājñā karite pālana
habe nā ki citta dṛḍha yatna prāṇa-pana

My spirit does not rise up and cry out for service to his feet. How much longer will I unconsciously remain in this state of deep bewilderment? Will my mind never be firm and commit fully to following my spiritual master's commands without question?

tuccha svārtha siddhi hāni cintā uṭhi mane
vañcibe ki guru sevā mahā mūlya dhane
prabhu mukha nihsarita amṛtera vānī
śunile niḥṣeṣe dūra haya saba glāni

Will absorption in my insignificant personal goals always cheat me of the most valuable treasure of service to my spiritual master? If I had truly listened to his ambrosial messages, I would be free of this lamentation.

Remembering His Lotus Feet

*divya cakṣu jñāna dātā janme janme prabhu
sutarām tac-chiṣya-gaṇe bheda nāhi kabhu
bhāye bhāye bheda-bhāva kariyā vidūra
sabe mile miṣe sevā kariba prabhura*

The holy preceptor who has opened my eyes with divine knowledge is my lord, birth after birth. Therefore, no one should make a distinction between him and his disciples. We will serve our spiritual master as brothers, eliminating the differences that exist between us.

*jīva-hita jāgi prabhu kariyā jatana
śrī-caitanya-mano'bhīṣṭa karilā sthāpana
grantha-patrikādi dvāre śrī-bhakti-siddhānta
pracāri nāsilā saba kurāddhāsta-dhvānta*

Srila Prabhupada worked for the benefit of all living beings and this is why he established the mission of Lord Chaitanya on this earth. He preached the message of pure devotion through books and periodicals, destroying the darkness of ignorance everywhere.

*gaura-nāma gaura-dhāma gaura-mukha-vāṇī
sarvatra pracāra kailā nyāsī-śiromaṇi
bhāgavata-pradarśini ādi kata bhāve
śuddha-bhakti pracārite yatna kailā bhave*

As the best of the sannyasis, Srila Prabhupada preached the name of Gaura, the abode of Gaura and the message of Gaura everywhere that he went. He also established exhibitions based on the Bhagavata as a way of preaching pure devotional service.

*śola vā caurāṣi-kroṣa gaura-kṛṣṇa-dhāma
parikrami sarva-dhāme gāhilenā nāma
pañca mukhya bhakti aṅga karite yajana
apūrva suyoga sabe kailā vitarāṇa*

He sang the names of the Lord everywhere throughout the Dham while performing the 84-kros parikrama in Vraja and the 16-kros parikrama in Nabadwip. In so doing, he gave everyone the opportunity to practice the five main devotional activities all at once.

*prācya o pāścātya-deśe śikṣita-samāje
sa-gaurave gaura-gāthā āji je virāje
prabhura pracāra-ceṣṭā āche tāra mūle
tāi viśva-vāsī jaya jaya gaura bale*

The prestige that the teachings of Gauranga Mahaprabhu have in the learned communities of both the East and the West has its basis in Prabhupada's preaching effort; now everywhere in the world, people sing "Jaya Jaya Gaurā!"

*śrī-māyāpure ākara caitanya-maṭha-rāja
tāra śākhā gaudīya-maṭha khyāta viśva-mājha
sarvatra sthāpiyā viśve śrī-maṭha-mandira
uṛāla vijaya-dhvajā śrī-śuddha-bhaktira*

Prabhupada established the great matha in Mayapur named Chaitanya Math, and branch mathas far and wide. In all these temples and monasteries, he raised the victory banner of pure devotional service to Krishna.

*sei śuddha-bhakti-pūta vaiṣṇava-ācāra
āpani ācari prabhu karilā pracāra
mūla grantha ṭikā bhāṣaṇa prabandhādi dvārā
karilā pracāra śrī-bhaktivinoda-dhārā*

Prabhupada demonstrated the ideal Vaishnava behavior and at the same time preached the conception of service established by Bhaktivinoda Thakur through publishing the Goswamis books and commentaries, while himself explaining them through his own commentaries and articles.

*śrī-bhakti-dayita-mādhava tānra priyatama
tānra ānugatye sthāpiyāche mathottama
pavitra śrī-māyāpura-dhāme śrī-īśodyāne
mūla śrī-caitanya-gaudīya-maṭha śubhākhyāne*

His dearmost disciple Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaj followed in his footsteps and established a beautiful temple and monastery in Sri Mayapur Ishodyan, naming it the headquarters of the Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math.

*mukhya śākhā tāra haya dakṣiṇa kalikātā
tāhāo śrī-caitanya-gaudīya-maṭha nāme khyātā*



*śrī-vṛndāvana hāyadarābāda āsāma
prabhṛti sthāneo śākhā āche nirupama*

He subsequently established the main branch of the Chaitanya Gaudiya Math in South Calcutta and then further branches in Vrindavan, Hyderabad, Assam and other parts of India.

*śrī-caitanya-vāṇī nāmni patrikā pradhāna
prabhu mukha śruta vāṇī tāhātei gāna
pāṭha vaktṛtādi dvāre kareṇa pracāra
āsamudra himācala tāhāra prasāra*

He published a monthly magazine named Chaitanya Vāṇī, in which the divine words put forth by Srila Prabhupada were given pride of place. Madhava Goswami Maharaj gave lectures and classes throughout India, from the Indian Ocean in the south to the Himalayas in the north, spreading Srila Prabhupada's teachings everywhere.

*kṛpā kara prabho modera tomāra caraṇe
ahaitukī bhakti jena thāke anukṣaṇe
tava dikṣā śikṣā anusāriyā satata
gāhība tomāra gāna haye anugata*

O Prabhupada! Please be merciful to us that we may always have unmotivated devotion to your lotus feet. May we always act in accordance with your initiation and your teaching and may we always glorify you as your disciples.

*sapārṣade gaurahari hale antardhāna
gauḍīya gagane jabe chāila ajñāna
śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti prabhupāda mora
āsīlena vināśite kali-tamo ghora*

Once Gaura Hari had disappeared along with His associates, the shadow of ignorance fell over the sky of Gauda (Bengal). Srila Prabhupada was the incarnation of Lord Gauranga's mercy-power and descended in order to destroy this terrible darkness of Kali.

*śrī vārṣabhānavi dayita dāsa dhari nāma
śrī bhaktisiddhānta sarasvatī guṇa-dhāma*

*śrī rādhā nayanamaṇi kṛṣṇa-priyatama
kṛṣṇa-kārya sādhibāre tānra āgamaṇa*

The abode of virtue, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, was also known as Sri Varshabhanavi-dayita Das ("servant of the lover of Vrishabhanu's daughter"). Most dear to Krishna, the cynosure of Radha's eyes, he is Sri Nayanamani Manjari. He appeared in this world to execute the will of Sri Krishna.

*bāra-śata-āśi māghī śrī-kṛṣṇa-pañcamī
tāhe sarva-śubha lagna kāla avalambi
udaya hailā prabhu nīlācale dhāme
śrī jagannātha mandirera ati sannidhāne*

My Prabhu appeared in Nilachala Dham, near the temple of Lord Jagannath, in the Bengali year 1280, at an auspicious moment on the fifth day of the waning moon in the month of Magh.

*gaurapriya mahājana śrī-bhaktivinoda
ṭhākura sutarūpe bārālena moda
bhakta-grhe bhakti-pariveśa-madhye janma
śūnite śūnite nāma aho dhanya dhanya*

Appearing as the son of Bhaktivinoda Thakur, Srila Prabhupada brought great joy to that authority and devotee dear to Gauranga Mahaprabhu. He was born in the house of a devotee in an atmosphere of devotion, in the midst of the chanting of the Holy Name. How glorious a birth it was!

*jagannātha prasādānna śrī-anna-prāśana
śrī-viṣṇu-prasāda-anna-grahaṇa ājivana
āśaiśava kṛṣṇa-kathā śravaṇa-kīrtana
ākumāra brahmacarya vrata saṁrakṣaṇa*

The first solid food he ate was Jagannath's prasada, and throughout his life he never ate anything but Vishnu prasada. From childhood, he always heard and discussed topics related to Krishna. Throughout his life, he observed the vow of celibacy.

*mahā-puruṣocita dvātrimśal-lakṣaṇa
prabhura śrī-aṅge chila se saba bhūṣaṇa*



*atisukomala kara-carāṇa-kamala
śiśuvat svalpāhārī mukhaśrī ujjala*

My Prabhu's body was ornamented with the thirty-two characteristics of a great personality. His hands and feet were so soft, like the skin of a baby. He ate little and his face was effulgent with purity.

*kṛṣṇa-nāma kṛṣṇa-kathā satata vadane
atyadbhuta anurāga śrī-kṛṣṇa-kīrtane
pāṣaṇḍa-dalana āra prema pracāraṇe
analasa prabhu sadā bāhya vismaraṇe*

He never used his tongue for anything other than chanting Krishna's name and talking about Him. His attachment for Krishna kīrtan was unbelievable. He tirelessly preached the message of love divine and defeated atheistic views, rising above all material conceptions of self.

*bhakti-anukūla pratikūla grahaṇe varjane
puspa-vajra-tulya hatena komala kaṭhine
lokāpekṣā-śūnya prabhu sad-dharma-rakṣaṇe
nirasta-kuhaka satya nirbhika kīrtane*

When accepting that which favored devotional service or rejecting that which was unfavorable to it, he was either as soft as a flower or hard as a thunderbolt. He was beyond consideration of public opinion; he was free of illusion and fearlessly performed Hari kīrtan.

*adhikāra ullāṅghiyā jaṇa-kāmāture
rāsādika-līlā-kathā kabhu nāhi sphure
tāi sarvathā niṣedhe prabhu anadhikāre
laha nāmāśraya yadi cāha adhikāre*

Prabhu always condemned those who listened or chanted Radha and Krishna's Rasa-līla and other esoteric pastimes without the proper qualifications and while still under the influence of material sex desire. He would always tell such unqualified people to take shelter of the Holy Name and to pray for the worthiness to advance to the appropriate level.

*mudrā-yantra sthāpi bhakti-granthera pracāre
bara-i ullāsa prabhura āchila antare
nāma-haṭṭa pracārite kata nā utsāha
nāma bhaja nāma cinta ukti aharahaḥ*

Prabhupada established printing presses for publishing devotional literature; this gave him great joy. He had boundless enthusiasm for preaching the Nama Hatta. Day and night he told everyone to chant and meditate on the Holy Name.

*emana dayālu prabhu kebā kothā pāya
bhāgya-hīna tāi tānre hārāinu hāya
kintu e bara bharasā citte dhari nirantara
janme janme hai jena tānhāra kinkara*

Where else could we find anyone as compassionate as my Prabhu? Alas, I am so unfortunate that I have lost his association. Still, I constantly harbor a great hope in my heart that I may be his servant, birth after birth.

*tera-śata tetālīśa kṛṣṇa caturthī tithite
niśānta līlāya prabhu praveṣe prabhāte
śrī-rādhā-mādhava jabe gāṛha samāśleṣa
śrī-gaura-līlāra jāhe karena uddeśa*

On the fourth day of the waning moon in the month of Magh in the Bengali year 1342, Prabhu entered Sri Radha-Madhava's early morning pastimes, when They are tightly wound in embrace—the very pastime that gives an indication of Lord Gaurāṅga's incarnation.

*prabhu-aprakāṣe mora hṛdaya gagana
eki hala hāya andha-tamete magana
kothā gela sukha śānti hāsi mākḥā mukha
sadā hā hatāśa kari duḥkha bharā buka*

When Srila Prabhupada disappeared I felt that my heart had become clouded over with an absolute darkness. I felt as though I had lost all happiness, all peace, as I could no longer see his smiling face. My chest was heavy with sadness and I sighed constantly in hopelessness.



japa-dhyāna kari bate mane śānti nāi
 ki jena hārāye gechi khuñje nāhi pāi
 e adhama barā duḥkhī prabhu kṛpā kara
 śrī-nāma-bhājane rati dāo he satvara

Of course I go on chanting japa and practicing my meditation, but I feel no peace of mind. It is as though I have lost something and cannot find it, though I keep on looking. Prabhu! I am so fallen and disheartened—please quickly give me attraction for chanting the Holy Name.

dharechinu jei duṭi pada bakṣe tuli
 cirāśraya deha tāhe jena kabhu nāhi bhuli
 kariyāchi kata amārjanīya doṣa oi padatale
 adoṣa-daraśi prabho kṣama saba bhule

Give me eternal shelter under those same lotus feet that I once held on my chest. May I never forget them. How many unpardonable offenses have I committed to those lotus feet. Dear Prabhu, please do not take offense and forgive and forget them all.

agatira gati tumi anya gati nāi
 tava kṛpā vinā kṛṣṇa-kṛpā nāhi pāi
 daṇḍa diyā saṁśodhiyā rākha he caraṇe
 keha nā rakṣite pāre o caraṇa bine

You are the only shelter of the hopeless and I have no other resort but you. Without your mercy I cannot get the blessings of Krishna. Punish me if you must, but correct my flaws and make me worthy of your lotus feet. No one can protect me other than you.

ananta-śrī-vibhūṣita o rāṅgā caraṇe
 praṇami saṣṭāṅge kṛpā kara abhājane
 patita-pāvana prabho patite uddhāra
 tava dāsa-dāsa kari dāo sevā-adhikāra

Your lotus feet are decorated with infinite opulences. I prostrate myself before them and ask for your mercy, though I am most unworthy. O Lord, you are the savior of the most fallen, save me, make me the servant of your servant and give me the qualification to serve you.

kothā pābo kṛṣṇa-sevā tumi nāhi dile
 yugala-sevā-adhikāra tava kṛpāya mile
 śrī-rūpera kṛpāleśa tumi dite pāra
 rāṅgānugā bhaktye tabe pāba adhikāra

Where will I find service to Krishna if you do not give it to me? By your mercy, it is possible to become worthy for the service of the Divine Couple. You can pass on the blessings of Rupa Goswami and the qualifications to worship on the rāṅgānugā path.

vidhi-bhaktiye vraja-bhāva kabhu nāhi pāi
 se bhaktio tava kṛpā vinā hate nāi
 tāi dante tṛṇa dhari oi rāṅgā pāya
 parinu saṣṭāṅge kṛpā kara amāyāya

No one can attain the mood of the residents of Vraja by the formal practice of vidhi-bhakti. Even so, without your mercy, we could not even maintain such practice of devotion. So I place straw between my teeth and I fall down at your rose-colored feet and ask you to be merciful toward me.

mohana pāmara prati hao he sadaya
 adhamera sarva-doṣa kṣama dayāmaya
 caṭṭya-guru rūpe vasi hrdayera mājhe
 dāo śuddha-buddhi more tava sevā-kāje

I am so deeply illusioned, so be compassionate towards me. O merciful one, please forgive all the faults that I have committed. Take up residence in my heart as the caṭṭya-guru and give me the pure intelligence by which I can serve you.

mahānta-svarūpe sadā rakṣa he āmāya
 tava sevā chāri mana kāhān nāhi jāya
 tava nija-jana-saṅge kṛṣṇa-kathā gāne
 kāte jena niśi-dina ei āśā praṇe

Come in the form of advanced devotees to protect me so that my mind never abandons your service. May I always remain in the company of those who were close to you, engaged in talking about Krishna and singing His glories. I pray with all my heart that my entire life passes in this way.



śiṣyera malina mukha dekhile kakhana
haite vyathita citta viṣaṇṇa vadana
śunāite kṛṣṇa-kathā kata sneha bhare
ghucita sakala vyathā śiṣyera antare

Sometimes when you saw your disciples looking pained or depressed and sad-faced, you would affectionately speak to them Krishna-kathā and rid them of all their distress.

āra ke śunābe kṛṣṇa-kathā āpanā pāsari
ke muchābe āṅkhi-jala eta sneha kari
bhāgya-hīna tāi morā vañcita hainu
cmana sneha-maya pitā sevite nārinu

Who is there now who will forget himself while speaking about Krishna? Who will affectionately wipe the tears from our eyes? We are so unfortunate and have been cheated that we have not been able to serve a father who is so affectionate to us.

prabho kata doṣa kariyāchi tomāra caraṇe
adoṣa-daraśi tumi sa-sneha bhartsane
śodhiyācha kṛṣṇa-kathā kariyā kīrtana
aphuranta sneha tava ke kare varṇana

O my lord! Whenever I committed faults to you personally, you would correct me by affectionately chastising me and purify me by talking about Krishna. Who can describe your inexhaustible love?

[Chaitanya Vāṇī 7.11, (Dec. 1966)]



With Tears of Separation

A poem written on the occasion of Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur's thirty-first disappearance day (1968).

*ahaitukī kṛpā tava nāhi pārāvāra
mo hena pāmara janeo karecho svīkāra*

There is no limit to your causeless mercy, for you have accepted even a fallen person such as myself.

*bārekerā tare jadi dilā adhikāra
hṛdaye dharite pada-kamala tomāra
vimukha dekhiyā ebe karo nā vañcita
śrī-carāṇa-sevā-dāne purāo vāñchita*

Since you once gave me the right to hold your lotus feet over my chest, do not now take me for one who is indifferent and deprive me of such contact. Fulfill my desires by giving me service to your lotus feet.

*aprakṛta kāle-o tumi nitya prakṛita
mādrśa jīvera sadā cāhitecha hita
kariyāchi karitechi kata je anyāya
tathāpi ekhano kṛpā kara amāyāya*

Although you may have disappeared from view, you are eternally present, for you constantly seek the welfare of living entities like myself. Though I have committed so many sins in the past and even now I continue to do so, please do not withhold your mercy from me.

*patita durgata jīve śodhibāre tare
kahiyācha harikathā kata nā ādare
bahirmukha jīve dekhi tritāpe tāpita
bhāsiyācha āṅkhi-nīre haiyā vyathita*

You affectionately recounted Hari-kathā to so many fallen, miserable, wretched, afflicted souls for their purification. Whenever you saw the jivas suffering the threefold miseries of material life, you were swept by tears from the pain.

*cintiyācha kise jīva pāibe uddhāra
kṛṣṇa prema dhana kise lābha habe tāra
kṛṣṇa-nāma vinā tāra dekhi nāhi gati
śikhāo jīvere nāme kara śighra rati*

You wondered how these conditioned souls could be delivered and how they could one day attain the great treasure of divine love. Without chanting Krishna's name, no one can make spiritual progress, so you advised all jivas to immediately develop a taste for such chanting.

*prati jīva dvāre jāi cāha ei bhikṣā
bala kṛṣṇa bhaja kṛṣṇa kara kṛṣṇa śikṣā
śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti vigraha dhariyā
tava rūpe avatīrṇa śrī-kṣetre āsiyā*

You knocked at every door and begged everyone to talk about Krishna, to worship Krishna and to learn about Krishna from the scriptures. Indeed, it was Lord Gauranga's own mercy-energy that took your form and appeared in Sri Kshetra Dham.

*tāi eta dayā tava dekhi anivāra
patite-o gṛhṇā-leśa nāhika tomāra
krame tathā hate āsi māyāpura-dhāme
sthāpilā śrī-caitanya-maṭha gaura-sevā kāme*

This is why we see you have unlimited mercy. You have not even the slightest abhorrence for the sinful. Eventually you left Puri for Sri Dham Mayapur



where you established Sri Chaitanya Math out of a desire to serve Gauranga Mahaprabhu.

*śrī-gaurāṅga-janma-sthāna ci māyāpura
prakaṭilā tāhā bhaktivinoda ṭhākura
vaiṣṇava-sārvabhauma śrī-jagannātha-dāsa
karilena samarthana kariyā ullāsa*

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur revealed Gauranga's birthplace in this holy land of Mayapur. The emperor of the Vaishnava world, Jagannath Das Babaji, showed great delight and confirmed Bhaktivinoda Thakur's discovery.

*śrī-gaura-kiśora-dāsa āra vaṁśī-dāsa
sabe mili jaya gāhi purālena āśa
śrī-bhaktivinoda-ceṣṭāya ati alpa-dine
iṣṭaka mandira eka haila nirmāṇe*

Not only he, but other great saints like Sri Gaura Kishor Das Babaji and Vamsi Das Babaji Maharaj also gave their approval and this gave great satisfaction to Bhaktivinoda Thakur. With Bhaktivinoda Thakur's efforts, a brick temple was built on the birthsite a short time later.

*tera-śata baṅga abde phālgunī pūrṇimāya
udilā tathāya viṣṇu-priyā gaura rāya
śrī-rādhā-mādhava āsileṇa vraja hate
brāhmaṇa pūjārī sevā kailā bhāla mate*

Then on the full moon day of the month of Phalgun in the Bengali year 1300, deities of Srimati Vishnupriya and Lord Gauranga were consecrated. Later, deities of Sri Sri Radha-Madhava were brought from Vraja and installed by Their sides and brahmin pujaris were engaged to properly worship Them.

*śrī-mandira-samakṣe eka br̥hat āṭa-cālā
tat-pāścimete eka panasa-vṛkṣa chilā
bāra-māsa phalita tāhe ati miṣṭa phala
śrī-gaura-mādhava-bhoge lāgita sakala*

Just beside the temple a large thatch-roofed building was built, to the west of which stood a jackfruit tree.

This amazing tree gave sweet fruit twelve months of the year and these fruit were offered to Their Lordships Radha-Madhava and Gaura-Vishnupriya.

*parama-guru śrī-gaura-kiśora (sahara) navadvīpa hate
āsiyā basitena sei panasa-talete
acchedya tulasī-vana yoga-pīṭhe raya
āmra-bilva-panasādi vṛkṣa-śobhā pāya*

Our param guru, Gaura Kishor Das Babaji Maharaj, would often come from Nabadwip and sit under this jackfruit tree. There was a tulasī garden on the site of the Yoga Pith that could not be removed. The site was also beautified with mango, wood apple and jackfruit trees.

*sugandhi puṣpera kuñje sthāne sthāne śobhe
sugandhe pūrīta vāyu bhakta-mano-lobhe
śrī-bābājī bhajanānande hatena nimagana
dhāmera cinmaya saundarye tāṇra mugdha hata mana*

Fragrant flower bushes were scattered in various places all over the site, filling it with a scent that delighted the minds of all the devotees. Srila Gaura Kishor Das Babaji would sit under the tree, joyfully absorbed in chanting the Holy Names, contemplating the transcendental beauty of the Holy Land.

*kichu dine gaura-priyatama prabhupāda
eka nava-mandira prakāṣite karilena sādha
śrī-bābājī mahāśaya basitena jathā
bhajitena prāṇa-priya gaurāṅga sarvathā*

Not long afterward, Lord Gauranga's dearest associate Prabhupada began to desire to build a new temple in the place where Babaji Mahasaya used to sit and wholeheartedly worship the lord of his life, Sri Gauranga.

*se-sthāne mandira bhitti khanana karite
jānālena abhiprāya bhakta-vṛnda-sādhe
prabhu-mano'bhīṣṭa jāni harṣe bhakta-gaṇa
avilambe sevā-kārye kailā ārambhaṇa*

You told of your intention to dig the foundations of



the temple in that spot for the pleasure of the devotees. When the devotees learned of Prabhupada's desire, they enthusiastically began to take up the service without delay.

*śrī-sakhī-caraṇa bhakti-vijaya takhani
artha-ānukūlya-dāne halena agrāṇi
śubha-dine śubha-kṣaṇe bhitti-khanana-kāle
bhakti-vṛnda pāilā eka mūrti bhitti-tale*

Sri Sakhi Charan Das Bhakti Vijaya donated money for its construction. The digging of the foundations was begun at an auspicious moment on an auspicious day. On the outset of the work, the devotees found an ancient Vishnu deity at the bottom of the hole.

*savismaye lai tāhā gaura-kumbha-jale
abhiṣeka karilena barā kutūhale
jaya-gāne yoga-pīṭha kari mukharita
prabhupāda pāśa gelā haiyā tvarita*

Everyone was quite astonished and they ecstatically performed a ritual *abhiṣeka* of the deity. The entire Yoga Pith rang with the sound of "jaya" and someone went to Prabhupada to tell him what had transpired.

*kalikātā maṭhe takhana prabhupādera vijaya
premānande pūrṇa tāṇra haila hṛdaya
pratna-tatva-vide prabhu ḍāki dekhāila
ati purātana mudrā sabeī kahila*

At that time, Prabhupada happened to be in the Calcutta matha, and when he heard the news, his heart was overcome with great love and joy. He called reputed archeologists and when he showed them the deity, they all agreed that it showed signs of great antiquity.

*siddhārtha-saṁhitā dekhi prabhu nāma kaila
astra-bhede adhokṣaja nāma tāṇra haila
jei adhokṣaja kathā prabhu punaḥ punaḥ
śikṣā dena bhakti-gaṇe kariyā jatana*

Prabhupada looked in the *Siddhārtha-saṁhitā* and

ascertained that, according to the way in which the weapons were held in the hands of the four-armed form, it was a deity of Adhokṣaja Vishnu. Prabhu had taught his disciples over and over again about the Supreme Lord's *adhokṣaja* nature, i.e., that He is beyond the purview of the mundane senses.

*sei adhokṣaja viṣṇu prakāṣa haiyā
svayaṁ śikhāna tattva daraśana diyā
kṛṣṇa-nāma-dhāma ādi indriya-grāhya naya
sevonmukhendriye tāhā sva-prakāśa haya*

This same Adhokṣaja Vishnu had manifested His presence before everyone's eyes as if to instruct us in the theological principle of divine revelation—that He can show Himself if He so pleases. Anything connected with Krishna, such as His name or abode, are inaccessible to the material senses. The Lord may be pleased to manifest Himself to the senses of those who have turned to Him in a spirit of service.

*eimate gaura-dhāme basi prabhu aṣeṣa-viṣeṣe
gaura-dhāma-nāma-kāma sevena hariṣe
apatita bhāve tina lakṣa nāma laya
avasara-kāle grantha paṛaya likhaya*

In this way, Prabhupada resided in Gaura Dham, enthusiastically serving His name, His land and His desires. Every single day, he would unfailingly chant three lakhs of Holy Names and when time allowed, he would study and write devotional books.

*ūniṣa śata caudda sāle āṣāṛhī amāvasyāya
śrī-bhaktivinoda ṭhākura praveśena nitya-līlāya
para-varṣe punaḥ utthānaikādaśī dine
parama-guru gaura-kīśora hailā antardhāne*

In 1914, on the dark moon day of the month of Aṣarh, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thakur entered the Lord's eternal pastimes. The following year, on the Utthāna Ekādaśī day, param gurudeva Śrīla Gaura Kishor Das Babaji Maharaj, also disappeared from worldly view.

*parapara dui mahā-puruṣa-niryāṇe
atīva kātara prabhu hailena prāṇe*



*baṛa-i nirvede prabhu hā hutāśa kari
kāṇdite lāgilā śudhu phukāri phukāri*

The successive disappearance of these two great personalities left Srila Prabhupada feeling lifeless. He underwent a deep feeling of depression and mourned their loss with heavy tears.

*muhur muhuḥ dīrgha-śvāsa chāri prabhu kaya
e chāra parāna āmi chāriḥa niścaya
vaiṣṇava jagat āji āṇdhāra haila
asura-svabhāva jīvera prabhāva bāriḥa*

Sighing continually, Prabhu thought that he would soon die himself because of the separation he felt from his spiritual masters. He thought, "Night has fallen on the Vaishnava world and the influence of demoniac people is increasing.

*kāra kache jāi āra jurāba parāna
mora vyathā bujhi kāra jharibe nayāna
ke śunābe kṛṣṇa-kathā anurāga bhare
para-duḥkha dekhi kāra hṛdaya vidare*

"To whom can I go to find peace of mind? Who will shed tears upon hearing about my distress? Who will affectionately speak to me about Krishna? Whose heart will break at hearing of the distress of others in this world, as theirs would?

*mora prabandha nibandha granth kāre dekhāiba
ānanda karibe kebā utsāha dāniba
pracāra prasāra śuni ke habe prasanna
dhāma-sevaujvalye kāra bāriḥa ānanda*

"To whom will I show my articles and books? Who will take pleasure in my writings and encourage me to continue? Who will take pleasure in hearing about the preaching work and the increasing splendor of the Holy Dham and our service to it?"

*ei mata vilāpa prabhu karena anukṣaṇa
śrī-guru-virahe śūnya dekhena tribhuvana
hena kāle eka-rātre samādhisthāvasthāya
dekhilena yoga-pīṭha divya-jyotirmaya*

In his mourning, Prabhupada turned these questions over and over in his head, seeing the entire universe as void in their absence. One night, while still in this pitiable condition, he was absorbed in samadhi when he saw the Yoga Pith fill up with a divine light.

*purātana nāṭa-mandira abhyantare
pañca-tattva virājita prasanna antare
tat paścāt śrī-bhaktivinoda mahāśaya
samīpete śrī-gaura-kīśora prabhu haya*

In the old kirtan hall, he saw the Pancha Tattva sitting in great satisfaction. Behind them stood his gurus Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and Srila Gaura Kishor Prabhu.

*prabhupāde sambodhiyā śrī-gaurāṅga kaya
sarasvati kena tava viṣaṇa hṛdaya
adamyā utsāhe tumi karaha pracāra
kona bhaya nāhi kara habe jaya kāra*

Mahaprabhu Himself called out to Srila Prabhupada, saying, "Saraswati! Why are you feeling depressed? Go on preaching with indomitable enthusiasm. Have no fear, for your victory will be glorified everywhere.

*agaṇita dhana-bala jana-bala āra
apekṣibe tomā tare ki bhaya kāhāra
sabe mili āśīrvāda karilā prabhure
prabhu-o sāṣṭāṅga-nati kailā sabākāre*

"Unlimited wealth and manpower await you, so you should have no fear of anyone." All of Mahaprabhu's associates then gave Prabhupada their blessings and Prabhupada fell down, prostrating himself before them in obeisance.

*prasanna vadane sabe antardhāna hailā
prabhupāda nāmānande rātri goṇāilā
yoga-pīṭhe abhra-bhedī mandira uṭhila
tripurādhīsera dvārā dvārodghāṭana kaila*

Then, with smiles on their faces, they all disappeared. Prabhupada spent the rest of the night absorbed in the joys of the Holy Name. The great



skyscraping temple finally went up on the Yoga Pith site and its doors were ceremonially opened by the Maharajah of Tripura.

*ūnśa śata āṭhāra sālē mārca māse
gaura-janma-dine prabhu lailā sannyāse
nitya-siddha gaura-jana loka-śikṣā tare
tridaṇḍa-dhāraṇa-lilā vaidika vicāre*

In March 1918, on the occasion of Mahaprabhu's appearance day, our Prabhu took sannyas. He is an eternally perfect associate of Lord Gauranga and thus his taking of the triple staff of renunciation according to the Vedic regulations was meant for the education of the people in general.

*viśva-vyāpī śrī-gauḍīya maṭha samūhera
ākara śrī caitanya maṭha kendra pracārera
ṣaṭ-ṣaṣṭhi maṭha prabhu sthāpi sthāne sthāne
kṛṣṇa-kathāmṛta-vanyāra ānilā plāvane*

Prabhupada established Gaudiya Maths throughout the world, but the Chaitanya Math in Mayapur was the headquarters for all these preaching efforts. Altogether, sixty-six *maṭhas* were established in many different places, bringing down a flood of nectarean Krishna-kathā to the world.

*mudrā-yantra sthāpe prabhu bara-i utsāhe
bṛhat-mṛdaṅga bali jāra nāma kahe
chaya-khāni sāmāyika patra vibhinna bhāṣāya
hari-kathā pracārite prabhu prakāśaya*

Prabhu was enthusiastic about setting up printing presses, dubbing them "the big mridangas." He published six different periodicals in different languages, all for the one purpose of broadcasting the tidings of Lord Hari.

*ihā chārā bṛhaspati jyotirvid nivedana
māsika dainika patra chila saṅghaṭana
svaracita sampādita bahu grantha chāpi
śrī-bhaktisiddhānta-vāṇī pracārena sarva-vyāpī*

Besides these, he also published [at an earlier time in his life] two periodicals on astrology called *Bṛhaspati*

and *Jyotirvid*. Some of these periodicals came out daily, some were weekly and some monthly. He also wrote and edited many books by which his message was spread far and wide.

*kurukṣetra māyāpura dhākā kalikātā
pātanā kāśī prayāga ādi jathā tathā
sat śikṣā pradarsinī sthāpiyā mahatī
śrīmad bhāgavatī śikṣā karilā vistrīti*

In places as varied as Kurukshetra, Mayapur, Dhaka, Calcutta, Patna, Varanasi, and Prayag, he organized great exhibitions of the holy teachings based on the Srimad Bhagavatam.

*sabhā sammilanī saṅgha ādi pratiṣṭhāne
sthāpiyā pracāra-kārya kailā sāvadhāne
śrī-caitanya-pāda-pīṭha hailā prakāṭita
sei saba mahā tīrtha gaura pada pūta*

He organized various assemblies, committees and associations to oversee the preaching activities.¹ He also had shrines to the lotus feet of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu installed in various holy places that the Lord had visited.

*lupta-tīrthoddhāra āra bhakti-sadācāra
vaiṣṇava-smṛti-saṅkalana śrī-mūrti-pracāra
ācāryera ei cāri kṛtya prabhu tumi
kariyācha saviśeṣe sarva-guṇe guṇī*

The task of an acharya is to discover and revive the lost holy places, to preach the proper saintly behavior suitable for devotion, to publish books on Vaishnava thought and to establish service to the Lord's deity form. You performed all these tasks in the most perfect manner, being endowed with all the great virtues.

*śrī-dhāma-navadvīpe vraja-gaura-maṇḍale
mahā-samārohe parikramā pravartile
ei parikramā phale pañca mukhya se sādhana
kahiyaṅcha tāra-svare labhe jīva gaṇa*

You commenced various pilgrimage tours for the Vaishnavas, the sixteen kros parikrama of Nabadwip,



as well as sixty-four kros parikramas of Vraja mandala and Gaura mandala. You would say that when engaged in parikrama, the jiva performs all the five principal acts of devotion simultaneously.

*sādhū-saṅga nāma-kīrtana bhāgavata-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana
sakala-sādhana-śreṣṭha ei pañca aṅga
niṣṭhā haite upayaja premara taraṅga*

"Associating with devotees, chanting the holy name of the Lord, hearing Srimad Bhagavatam, residing in Mathura and worshiping the Deity with faith and veneration. These five limbs of devotional service are the best of all; waves of love of Godhead will ensue in the hearts of those performing them with fixed determination or niṣṭhā." (CC 2.22.214, 219)

*tāi parikramā baṛa ādara kariyā
pratyaḥ sādhlilā bhakta-vṛnda saṅge laiṇā
tad rūpa vaibhava dhāma dhāma-kṛpā vinā
bhakta-saṅga bhakti-lābha kabhu to haya nā*

For this reason you gave special importance to the annual parikrama, making sure to go yourself every year in the company of your devotees. Without the mercy of the Holy Dham, which possesses such opulence, association of devotees and devotion itself can never be attained.

*māghī kṛṣṇā pañcamīte pañca-vimśa dine
vāra-śata āśi sane baṅgābda gaṇane
hy utkale puruṣottamāt śāstra-vāṇī
anusari nīlācale udilā āpani*

On the 25th of Magh, the fifth day of the waning moon, in the Bengali year 1280, you appeared in Puri to fulfill the scriptural prophecy that the divine message will be broadcast from Purushottam Dham.

*āvirbhūta haile prabhu ati śubha-kṣaṇe
śuddha-bhakti pracārite tava āgamane
mahāprabhu ācarita pracārita nāma
pracārite śuddha-bhāve ohe guṇa-dhāma*

From the auspicious moment that you appeared on this

earth, O Prabhupada, you began preaching the process of pure devotional service. O abode of virtue! From that very moment, you preached the Holy Names exemplified by the life and precepts of Sriman Mahāprabhu in utmost purity.

*tera-śata tetālīṣa pauṣa ṣoḍaṣe
māghī kṛṣṇā caturthī tithira śeṣa bhāge
śrī-rādhā gopināthera niśānta līlāya
praveśilā prabhu prathama yāma-sevāya*

In the Bengali year 1342, on the 16th of Paus, or according to the lunar calendar, the fourth days of the waning moon in the month of Magh, you entered the pastimes of Sri Sri Rādhā-Gopinātha to engage in the first period of Their eternal daily cycle.

*nitya-līlā-rasa-prāpti ānanda tomāra
tomāra ānande baṭe ānanda sabāra
kintu prapañce prākāṭya tava nā dekhiyā āra
theke theke prāṇa keṇde uthe bāra bāra*

What ecstasy you must feel to have entered into the eternal pastimes! And your ecstasy sustains us all! However, now that we no longer see you in this world, we who remain feel the tears of separation welling within us.

*nibārite nāri netre bahe āśru-dhāra
kothā nāhi pāi khuñje sthāna sāntvanāra
mādrśa ajñāna jīvera kibā gati habe
āra ki pāiba tava caraṇa parāge*

We are incapable of stopping the tears from flowing in torrents from our eyes, and nowhere do we find solace. What will be the outcome for an ignorant fool like myself? Will I ever find the dust of your lotus feet again?

*kāṇa-dhāra-hīna tarī ki rūpe calibe
e bhava samudra mājhe āvarte pariḇe
śunīyāchi guru-tattva jīva-nitya-bandhu
kabhu nā chārena śiṣye hana kṛpā sindhu*

How can a boat sail without a captain? It will be caught in a whirlpool in the midst of this material



ocean. We have heard that the spiritual master is the eternal friend of the conditioned soul and out of his mercy he never abandons his disciple.

*tāi ta bharasā citte dhari nirantara
adhama durgate nā chāra atahpara
jñāne vā ajñāne jata karitechi doṣa
sakala śodhiyā prabhu karaha nirdoṣa*

Because of these promises, I am hopeful that you will never abandon me, despite my worthlessness. I have committed so many offenses, sometimes knowingly, sometimes unknowingly. Please purify me and make me offenseless.

*parokṣe rākhiyā bakṣe caraṇa-kamala
ghucāo āmāra jata āse amaṅgala
janaka janani mātā pitā bandhu tumi
ajña aparādhi jīve nā chāriha svāmī*

By secretly placing your lotus feet on my chest, you removed all the inauspiciousness in my life. You are my father and mother; you are my only friend. You are my master, so never abandon me, even if I am an ignorant and offensive jiva.

*tava nitya-dāsa bali more aṅgikāra
tava nija-jana-saṅge rākha atahpara
sādhu vā asādhu kichu nāhi bujhi āmi
asatyere satya bhrame hai vipatha-gāmī*

Accept me as your eternal servant and keep me henceforward in the company of your personal associates. I have no knowledge of what is good or bad and I am constantly confused about truth and falsehood, being misled down the path of error.

*tumi sadā kṛpā kari āmāre cālāo
ohe prabho kabhu more nāhi chāri jāo
bhīma-bhavārṇave dekhi baṛa śaikā cite
supathe vipatha bhrama haya ajñānete*

O Master, guide me constantly with your mercy and never abandon me. This terrible ocean of material life fills me with anxiety that I will confuse the right

and wrong paths out of ignorance.

*tumi more hāte dhare cālāiyā lao
tabe ta supatha dhari vrajera patha pān
dayāmaya dīna-bandhu patita-pāvana
e adhame āra nāhi chāribā kakhana*

Take me by the hand and lead me on the right path, so that I may find my way to Vrindavan. You are most merciful; you are the friend of the desitute, the purifier of the sinful. Never leave this lowly creature again.

*śaraṇa lainu tava caraṇa-kamale
e dāsere kara dayā āpanāra bale*

I have taken shelter of your lotus feet. Now I ask you to bless me and call me your own.

bhavadiya cira-dāsānudāsa śrī-bhakti-pramoda-purī

Your eternal servant, Sri Bhakti Promode Puri.

¹ The Bhaktivinoda Asan, 1918; Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha (World Vaishnava Association), 1924; Saraswata Asan, 1924; Gaudiya Sampadaka Sangha (The Gaudiya magazine editorial board), 1925; Nikhila Vaishnava Sammilani, 1927; Pāramārthika ālocanā sammiti, 1933; London Gaudiya Mission Society, 1934; Śrī Vraja-dhāma-pracārīnī Sabhā, 1935; Anukūla kṛṣṇānuśīlanāgāra, 1936; Daiva-varṇāśrama-saṅgha, 1936.

[From *Chaitanya Vāñī* 8.11, (Dec. 1968), pp. 252-255]



Thirty-two Years of Separation



poem written on the occasion of Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur's thirty-third disappearance day (1970).

Prabhupāda!
eke eke dvātrimśad varṣa gata-prāya
praveśa karecha nitya yugala-līlāya

Prabhupada! One by one, nearly thirty-two years have passed since you entered the eternal pastimes of the Divine Couple.

vraja-yuva-dvandva jabe niśi-aveśeṣe
gāḍha samāśliṣṭha hana mahāpremāveśe

At that moment, it was the end of night when Radha and Krishna were locked in the profound embrace of ecstatic love.

rasarāja-mahābhāva donhāra milana
śrī gaura-nitya-līlā jāhe karaye sūcana

The time of your departure reveals that you entered into the pastimes of Gauranga, the union of the King of Sacred Rapture and the Manifestation of Supreme Love.

sekāle se-līlā-rase haiyā magana
audārya-pradhāna mādhyura kara āsvādana

You thus became immersed in relishing the pastime of Krishna that combines sweetness with the predominating spirit of munificence.

mādhyura-pradhāna audārya śrī-kṛṣṇa-līlāya
kata chala kari kṛṣṇa rādhāre kāndāya

The characteristic of Krishna's pastimes is munificence with a predominating spirit of sweetness. In those pastimes, Krishna finds so many different ways to make Radharani weep.

lukāye rādhāra prema kare āsvādana
ṛṇi māni āpanāre karaye cintana

Then Krishna hides to watch and relish Radha's love. Thinking Himself a debtor, Krishna begins to think:

pranaya mahimā rādhāra āhā kibā hana
rādhāsvādya man-mādhurya tāhā vā kemana
ki sukha pāyena rādhāra tāhā āsvādiyā
e-tine viṣaye lubdha haila śyāma-hiyā

"How can I ever understand the glories of Radha's feelings for Me? And how can I come to know My own sweetness in the way that She does? And how much happiness does Radha Herself enjoy by loving Me?" These questions awakened three desires in Shyamasundara's heart.

viṣayera bhāve vāñchā nahibe pūraṇa
tāi āśrayera bhāva kṛṣṇa karilā grahaṇa

"As long as I have taken the attitude that I am the object of Her love, I will never be able to experience Her feeling." So thinking, Krishna adopted the nature of the reservoir of loving feeling, Radha.

janama labhiyā navadvīpa-māyāpure
śacī-garbha-sindhu-mājhe gaura-kalevare

In this mood, Krishna took birth as the son of Sachi in Nabadwip Mayapur in His form as the Golden Avatar.



*kāṇḍilā rādhāra bhāve kāṇhā kṛṣṇa bali
uchalila prema-banyā bhāsila sakali*

He spent his life crying in the deep sentiments of Radha, wondering where Krishna had gone, and a flood of love of God flowed from Him, immersing everyone in the world.

*cabbiṣa vatsara śeṣa chāri gṛhavāsa
calilā śrī-nīlācale kariyā sannyāsa*

After twenty-four years, He renounced householder life, took sannyas, and went to Puri.

*chaya-vatsara tīrtha sthāne gatāgati kailā
āṭhāra vatsara dhari śrī-kṣetre rahilā*

For six years He wandered throughout India, visiting many holy places of pilgrimage. He then spent the last eighteen years of His life in Jagannath Puri.

*tathi madhye chaya varṣa bhakta-saha mili
rathayātrā ādi līlā dekhila sakali*

Of those eighteen years, the first six were spent meeting His devotees and participating in the Rathayatra and other devotional festivals.

*śeṣa je dvādaśa vatsara gambhīrā madhyete
svarūpa-rāmarāya sane rahe divyonmāde*

In the last twelve years of His life, living in the Gambhira, He went deeper and deeper into divine madness in the company of Svarupa Damodar and Ramananda Raya.

*vipralambha-rasāveśe rādhā-bhāve gaura
nīlācale sindhu-tate kāṇḍilā pracura*

Gaura remained in the mood of Radharani, overcome by the mood of separation, crying profusely on the shores of the ocean at Puri.

*kāṇhā kṛṣṇa prāṇanātha muralī-vadana
kāṇhā jān kāṇhā pān vrajendranandana*

*kāhāre kahiba vyathā kebā jāne duḥkha
vrajendra-nandana binu phāṭe mora buka*

He would call out: "Where is the Lord of My life, Krishna, the flute player? What can I do to find Him? Where is the son of Maharaj Nanda? To whom can I talk of My distress? Who would understand Me? Without the son of Nanda Maharaj, My heart splits in two." (CC 2.2.15-16)

*sambhogāpekṣā vipralambhe adhika mādhuri
tāhā āsvādite tumi janamilā purī*

Knowing that there is more sweetness in the mood of separation than in union, O Prabhupada, you took birth in Puri to relish this mood.

*bāra-śata-āśi baṅga-abde sindhu-tate
śrī-jagannātha-mandirera ati sannikāṭe*

The year was 1280 of the Bengali era and the place was by the seashore, near the temple of Lord Jagannath.

*māghī kṛṣṇa-pañcamī gurubāra aparāhne
śrī-kṛṣṇa-kīrtana-mukharita vāsa-bhūme*

It was the afternoon of a Friday in the month of Magh, the fifth day of the darkening fortnight. The atmosphere was charged with the chanting of Holy Names that filled the house where you were born.

*hayecha udaya prabho bhaktera grhe
bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu jethā sahajei bahe*

An ocean of divine mellows flowed profusely when you appeared in the house of the great devotee, Bhaktivinoda Thakur.

*śrī-mahā-prasāde tava mukhyānna-prāśana
(ājanma) prasādānna vinā kichu nā kaile grahaṇa*

Your first solid food was the mahā-prasāda of Lord Jagannath, and indeed, from your very birth, you never ate anything but Krishna prasād.

Thirty-two Years of Separation

*tava āvirbhāva-grha-dvāre jagannātha
ratha rākhi rahilena tina divārāta*

During the Rathayatra festival, Jagannath's chariot stopped before your house for a full three days and nights.

*śrī-bhaktivinoda tabe kailā āyोजना
dina-traya hailā tathā mahāsaṅkīrtana*

Your father Bhaktivinoda Thakur organized a great sankirtan festival for that three-day period.

*tathi-madhye ekadina mātṛ-kroḍa-śāyī
ṣaṇ-māsa-vayaska śiṣu uṭhi rathopari*

On one of those days, though you were just a child of six months and still being carried in your mother's arms, you somehow mounted the chariot.

*ālingile jagannātha-kamala-carana
prabhura prasādi mālā karile grahaṇa*

There you embraced Lord Jagannath's lotus feet and accepted one of his prasadi garlands.

*janma hate daśa-māsa rahi purī-dhāme
baṅga-deśe āsi raha mātā-pitā sane*

When you were ten months old, your mother and father took you with them back to Bengal.

*śiṣu-kāla hate tava kṛṣṇa gāḍha-mati
dekhi mātṛ-pitṛ-mana ullasita ati*

When they saw your deep attachment for worshipping Krishna, even as a child, they were overjoyed.

*vidyā anurāga tava kibā adbhuta
śikṣaka-svajana-gaṇe kailā camakita*

Your extraordinary pleasure in learning amazed both your teachers and family.

*śrīrāmapure sthiti-kāle śrī-bhaktivinoda
dekhi tava kṛṣṇa-nāma bhajane pramoda*

While you were living in Serampore (Śrīrāmapura), Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was delighted to see how much you enjoyed chanting the Holy Names.

*purī hate ānāiyā tulasīra mālā
japibāre mahāmantra upadeśa dilā*

So he brought you a mala made of tulasi wood back from Puri and instructed you in chanting the Maha Mantra.

*śrī-nṛsiṃha-mantra-rāja-o dilena tomāre
bhakti-vighna-vināśite jinho śakti dhare*

He also gave you the great mantra for worshipping Nṛsiṅha Deva; it contains the potency to destroy all obstacles on the path of devotion.

*śrī-caitanya-śikṣāmṛta parālena tomā
dekhilena bodha-śakti tava anupamā*

When he recognized your unparalleled power of comprehension, your father gave you lessons in Vaishnava theology from his book, *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*.

*kalikātā-rāma-bāgāne bhakti-bhavana
grha-bhitti jei kāle haila khanana
(tat-kāle) kūrma-deva-mūrti eka halena prakāśita
tāhā dekhi hale prabhu kata haraṣita*

When foundations were being dug for the Bhakti Bhavan in Calcutta's Ram Bagan neighborhood, a deity of Kurma Deva was found. O Master, you were ecstatic to see the deity appear in this way.

*pūjibāre sei mūrti hala tava mana
tāhā jāni bhaktivinoda ānandita hana*

You desired to worship this deity and this greatly pleased Srila Thakur Bhaktivinoda.

*pūjā-mantra pūjā-vidhi upadeśa dilā
yathā-vidhi sei mūrti pūjite lāgilā*

He thus gave you the mantra for worshipping the



Kurma deity as well as instructions about what to do. You began to worship the deity according to the proper rules and regulations.

*tilakādi sadācāra śiśukāla hate
pāliyācha tumi prabho bhakti-pūta cite*

O Prabhu, from your early childhood you accepted the practices of the Vaishnavas, such as wearing tilak, with a mind purified by devotion.

*nitya-siddha tumi prabho sādhanē jatana
loka-śikṣā tare śudhu kailā prakāṭana*

You are an eternally perfect being, so the external efforts you made at practicing devotional service were simply for setting an example for the rest of us.

*(thākura) śrī-bhaktivinoda-kṛta bhakti-grantha jata
parecha sakali tānra haiyā anugata*

You read all of Thakur Bhaktivinoda's books on devotion and followed in his footsteps in every other way.

*mahājana-viracita āro grantha śata
adhyayana adhyāpanā kariyācha kata*

You also carefully studied and taught the many hundreds of other books written by great authorities on spiritual life.

*prupha-rīdin ādi kārya śikhi śiśu hate
thākurerā sahāyatā kailā bhāla mate*

Even when you were a little boy, the Thakur taught you how to proofread and to assist him in other ways in the publication work.

*grantha patrikādi jata pracāre tānhāra
sevā-buddhye sahāyatā karecha apāra*

In this way you helped him publish many books and journals, doing all these things in a spirit of service.

*kata āśīrvāda tinho karechena tomā
guru-sevādarśa prabho tomāte upamā*

The Thakur thus blessed you immeasurably and you set the standard by which each of us can compare our own service to the spiritual master.

*jyotirvidyāya tava advitīyādhikāra
vidvad-varenya sabe hailā camatkāra*

Your knowledge of astrology was incomparable. Everyone was amazed at your mastery of various fields of learning.

*atyalpa vayasa dekhi apūrva pratibhā
sabe bale e-bālaka asāmānya kebā*

Even while you were very young, people were astonished to see your numerous talents and would say, "There is no one like this boy anywhere."

*mahābhāgavata guru sakale tomāre
śrī-siddhānta-sarasvatī upādhi vitare*

Your masters recognized that you would become a mahābhāgavata spiritual master and thus gave you the title Sri Siddhanta Saraswati.

*ūnavimśa-śata aṣṭādaśa khrṣṭa abde
tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa jabe lailā śāstra mate
takhana se śrī-bhaktisiddhānta sarasvatī
nāmete haila sarva jagatete khyāti*

In 1918, when you took tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa according to scriptural injunctions, you changed this name to Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, by which you became famous throughout the world.

*parivrājakācārya-rūpe bhārata bhramilā
śrī-caitanya-candrera vāṇī viśve bilāilā*

Then you became a parivrājakācārya and traveled throughout India, preaching the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to the world.



Thirty-two Years of Separation

*tomāra śrī-mukha-vāṇī śuni bhāgyavān
druta āsi lailena śrī-carāṇe sthāna*

So many fortunate persons who heard you quickly came and took shelter at your lotus feet.

*śrī-bhaktivinoda ṭhākurera pratiṣṭhita
śrī-viśva-vaiṣṇava-sabhā kaile ujīvita*

You enlivened the World Vaishnava Association (Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha) that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur had reestablished.

*ai sabhāya haṭṭa pāṭha prati rabibāre
bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-grantha bhakti-sāre*

The Thakur lectured in that august assembly every Sunday, extracting the devotional ambrosia from the great ocean of Rupa Goswami's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

*śrī-bhaktivinoda ṭhākura karitena vyākhyā
satya satya uchalita amṛta-sindhu tathā*

When Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur explained this book, the ocean of nectar truly overflowed.

*prabho tumi sei grantha bahi ānite sabhāya
basiyā śunite śāstra ekānta hiyāya*

Prabhu, you would carry the book into the assembly and then sit down and listen attentively.

*kṛṣṇa-bhakta-saṅge sadā kṛṣṇa-kathā raṅge
rahiyā bhesecha sadā premera tarāṅge*

Thus you enjoyed listening to Krishna-kathā in the company of devotees, floating in the waves of ecstatic love.

*skula-pāṭhya-grantha saba paṛi alpa-kṣaṇe
bhakti-grantha pāṭhemana diyācha nirjane*

You went through all your schoolbooks very quickly and then spent the greater part of your time secretly studying devotional literature.

*jyotiṣa-sāstrete chila prabalānurāga
bhakti-bādhā haya bali tāhā kailā tyāga*

You also were extremely interested in studying astrology, but finally you gave it up as an obstacle to pure devotion.

*śrī-bhaktivinoda ṭhākura-mahāśaya sane
bhramiyācha bahu-tīrtha kṛṣṇa-anveṣaṇe*

With Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur you traveled to many holy places, engaged in the search for Sri Krishna.

*śrī-bhaktivinoda ṭhākura-ājñā anusāre
atimartya caritra eka avadhūta bare*

Then, being instructed by Thakur Bhaktivinoda, you received the blessings of an *avadhūta* of extraordinary character.

*bhāgavatī dīkṣā labha guru-rūpe bari
(tad-āśraye) nirviṇṇa haiyā bhaja girivara-dhārī*

You accepted him as your guru and received Bhagavata initiation, whereupon you became even more detached from material life and began to worship the Lord of Govardhana.

*śrī-candraśekharaḷaye mājyāpura-dhāme
ekānte bāndhiyā kuṭī bhaja avirāme*

In Mayapur, at the site of Chandrasekhara's house, you built a thatched cottage where you lived all alone, worshipping the Lord without repose.

*haridāsa-ṭhākurera ādarśānuseri
tina lakṣa nāma laha bahu ārtti kari*

You followed the example set by Hari Das Thakur, fervently chanting three lakhs of Holy Names every day.

*cāturmāsya-vrata-kāle kaṭhora vairāgya
pāliyā bhajecha kṛṣṇe kari nāma-yajña*

You took up the intense asceticism of the *Chaturmasya*



vow, worshiping Krishna in the sacrifice of the Holy Name.

*śata-koṭi mahāmantra karecha kīrtana
bhūmete gogrāse haviṣya karecha grahaṇa*

You chanted a billion Holy Names in that period, eating only unsiced gruel from the ground without using your hands.

*anya-vākyālāpa nāhi kṛṣṇa-nāma binu
aharniṣa cakṣu-jale bhāṣiyāche tanu*

You never used your tongue to say anything other than the Holy Names. Day and night, tears washed over your entire body.

*ādarśa bhajana-ceṣṭā dekhiyā tomāra
hayeche vismita sabe jaṅgama sthāvara*

All living beings, both moving and unmoving, were astonished at your exemplary method of worshiping the Supreme Lord.

*(śrī)-rūpānuga gaura-śakti śrī-bhaktivinoda
(śrī)-gaura-mano' bhīṣṭa-sevāya sadā jānra moda*

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur is the potency of Sri Gauranga and a true follower of Sri Rupa. His only pleasure in life is in the service of establishing Mahaprabhu's mission in this world.

*gaura-deśe gaura-janma-sthāna nirūpila
nirmatsara gaura-jana ānande mātila*

He designated the birthplace of Mahaprabhu in His abode of Nabadwip. This gave great pleasure to the non-envious devotees of Lord Gauranga.

*(śrī)-jagannātha-dāsa tathā śrī-gaura-kiśora
nitya-siddha gaura-jana nitya-parikara*

Jagannath Das Babaji and Srimad Gaura Kishor were eternal associates of Lord Gaurasundara. They are eternally perfect.

*sabe mili eka-vākye kahe tāra-svare
gaurāṅgera janma-sthāne ei māyāpure*

These great saints and others joined together to loudly proclaim that Gauranga's birthplace was indeed here in Mayapur.

*ei sei supracīna nadiyā-nagarī
sapārṣade jathā līlā kailā gaura-harī*

This is the site of the ancient city of Nabadwip and it is here that Gaura Hari and His eternal companions performed their pastimes.

*sarasvatī bhagīrathī saṅgama sthānete
gaura-grha haya ballāla-dīghikā nikāte*

Mahaprabhu's home stands at the confluence of the Saraswati and the Bhagirathi Rivers, near the tank dug by King Ballal Sen.

*ekhano rayeche cihna ballāla-dīghira
dhvaṁsa-sthūpa virājita ballāla-bāṭūra*

The signs of Ballal's tank and the ruins of his palace can still be found there.

*kājira samādhi ai ta rahe avidūre
(kata) prācīna kāhinī kahe mauna-mudrā dhare*

Not very far from this spot is the tomb of Chand Kazi. How many stories from the past this land would tell us if only it could speak!

*sei ta cinmaya-dhāma cinmaya-saundarya
sei ta gaurāṅga-līlāra cinmaya-mādhurya*

This Holy Dham is completely spiritual and its beauty is completely spiritual, just as Gauranga's pastimes are of a completely divine sweetness.

*āpamare prema-dāna apūrva audārya
saba āche nāhi mora bhajana-cāturya*

Lord Gauranga's munificence in giving love of Godhead



Thirty-two Years of Separation

is incomparable. All this potential for spiritual perfection exists, but I am without a mind for worship.

*tāi bhāgya-hīna āmi bujhite nārinu
premera ṭhākura gaura hāya nā bhajinu*

Therefore, I am the most unfortunate soul and have not been able to understand. Alas! I have not worshiped the Lord of Love Divine, Sri Gauranga.

*adyāpi ta gaurahari dubāhu tuliyā
nācichena hari bali premete mātiyā*

Even today, Gaura Hari raises His arms in the air and dances here, intoxicated with the ecstasy of love and shouting, "Haribol!"

*nije kāndi kāndāiche sarvanārī-nare
vitariche vraja-prema giyā ghare ghare*

He himself cried tears of love and made every man and woman cry with Him. He went from door to door, distributing the gifts of Vraja prema.

*tava kṛpā vinā prabho kon jīva chāra
se mahāvadānya-līlā dekhibe gorāra*

O lord, what insignificant jīva can see the most munificent pastimes of Gaurahari without your mercy?

*viṣaya-dhulāya andha jāhāra nayana
kirūpe dekhibe sei tava prāṇa-dhana*

How can one whose vision has been blinded by the dust of sense desire expect to see your gift of life divine?

*gaura-kṛpā-śakti tumi gaura-nija-jana
gaura-dhāma gaura-nāma tomāra jīvana*

You are the manifestation of Gaura's potency of compassion and His personal associate. The name and abode of Sri Gauranga are your life and soul.

*tumi jānre kṛpā kari deha divya-netra
gaura-līlā nirakhite tiñho yogya pātra*

Whoever you mercifully give divine sight becomes qualified to see the pastimes of Lord Gauranga.

*nirvyalika haye tava caraṇe śaraṇa
nārinu labhite tāi adhanya jīvana*

I have not been able to take shelter of your lotus feet without any ulterior motivation. Thus, my life is most unfortunate.

*ayogya adhame kṛpā kara dayāmaya
amāyāya abhāgāre ṭāni laha pāya*

O most compassionate one! Please be merciful to this unqualified and fallen soul. Without guile, draw this luckless servant close to your lotus feet.

*tabe ta haibe dhanya ei abhājana
samarpibe o caraṇa kāya-prāṇa-mana*

Then I will be blessed, and though I am unworthy, I will surrender myself in body, mind, and soul to your lotus feet.

*sebibe parāṇa bhari o-pada-kamala
daikṣya-janma tabe tāre haibe saphala*

I will then serve those feet with all my life's energy. In this way, my life as your initiated disciple will bear fruit.

*śrī-guru-prasāda vinā śrī-kṛṣṇa-prasāda
kichu nāhi haya āro ghaṭaye pramāda*

Without the mercy of the spiritual master, Krishna's mercy is an impossibility. One simply commits errors on the spiritual path.

*prasanna haile guru sarva-siddhi haya
gaura-kṛṣṇa-kṛpā tānre haya suniścaya*

If the guru is satisfied with his disciple, then all perfections are possible. Without any doubt, Gaura and Krishna's mercy will be showered on him.

*śuddha-bhakti-śikṣā-dātā sad-guru jagate
baṛa-i durlabha vastu milaye bhāgyete*



The genuine spiritual master in this world gives instruction on pure devotional service. Such a rare thing can only come to those who are exceedingly fortunate.

hena ratna pāiyāo jei ajña-nara
(jara)-viṣaye bhuliyā tāñre kare anādara

And yet some ignorant people possess this rare jewel and still forget about it or ignore it, concentrating on material sense gratification instead.

bhāgya-hīna kebā āra āche tāra sama
sudhā chāṛi viṣa māge se bhrānta adhama

Who is more wretched than such a person? This fool is so confused that he rejects the ambrosia of the gods and begs for poison.

hena guru-pāda-padme haye-o āśrita
gaura-prema-rasāsvāde haila vañcita

Though I have taken shelter of such a genuine spiritual master's lotus feet, I have been deprived of the taste of divine love as given by Mahāprabhu.

gurv-ātma-daivata haiyā bhāgavata-dharma
śuniyā śikhaye jei sarva-śāstra-marma

One who makes his spiritual master the worshipable deity of his soul and listens to the instructions on Bhāgavata Dharma from him learns the true purport of all the scriptures.

aikāntikī bhakti-saha gaura-kṛṣṇa bhaje
śrī-guru-kṛpāya sei prema-rase maje

He worships Gaura and Krishna with exclusive devotion and, by the spiritual master's mercy, becomes immersed in the delights of ecstatic love.

guru-kṛta upakāra smariyā satata
śrī-guru-carāṇe prīti haya to vardhita

As he constantly remembers the good the spiritual mas-

ter has done for him, his love for him also increases.

prīti jata gāḍha haya bārhave mamatā
guru-sevā lāgi prāṇe jāge vyākulatā

As this love strengthens, his attachment also becomes stronger and he becomes anxious to serve the spiritual master.

(takhana) kṣaṇekera adarśana sahite nā pāre
guru-pāda-padma smari sadā āñkhi jhare

Then, he can no longer tolerate even a moment in the guru's absence. Whenever he remembers the guru's lotus feet, his eyes fill with tears.

śrī-guru-mahimā kare satata smarana
guru-mukha-vākya citte karaye milana

He ceaselessly remembers the resplendence of Sri Guru and enthrones his words on his heart.

guru-mano'bhīṣṭa sevā vinā nāhi jāne
guru prīta hale māne sārthaka jivane

He knows nothing but the service of the spiritual master's innermost desires. He considers his life to be perfected if he can only please his spiritual master.

gurudeva jāhā nāhi bāsitenā bhāla
tāhā tiñho kabhu nāhi smare kṣaṇa-kāla

The devoted disciple never thinks for a moment of anything his guru did not like.

viraha-tithira pūjā sei jana kare
śrī-guru-vihane jāra hṛdaya vidare

When the disciples gather to worship the spiritual master on the day of his disappearance, this disciple feels his heart tear into pieces in his separation.

dhyāna jñāna sarvasva jāhāra guru-pada
guru-prīti māne jei parama-sampada
nija lābha-pūjā-khyāti svapne-o nā cāya
śrī-guru-mahimā vṛddhi satata cintaya

Thirty-two Years of Separation

*dveṣa-himsā-mātsarya nāhi mane jānra
śrī-guru-sevake māne mānya āpanāra*

He for whom the spiritual master's lotus feet are the object of meditation, all that he knows and all that he possesses, who takes the spiritual master's pleasure to be his supreme achievement, who does not endeavor for his own profit, adoration or prestige, even in dreams, and who only thinks of how to spread the fame of his spiritual master, who has not the slightest amount of hatred, jealousy or envy in his heart, and who reveres all other servants of his spiritual master, thinks as follows:

*śrī-guru-dāsānudāsa muñi bhr̥tyādhamā
āmāra prabhura bhakta sakale uttama*

"I am the servant of my guru's servants, the most insignificant of his lackeys, and all of my spiritual master's devotees are eminently qualified;

*āmi tānhādera dāsa-anudāsa hañā
seviba śrī-guru-pada parāṇa bhariyā*

"I will simply follow in their footsteps and serve my spiritual master's lotus feet with all my life energy."

*guru-vākya eka āśraya-vigrahānugatye
sabe mile miśe sevā kara eka citte*

Prabhupada! Your last instructions were as follows: "Accepting the reservoir of devotion, Sri Radha, as your lead and serving the divine words of the spiritual master, all of you should cooperate in his service.

*(śrī)-rūpa-prabhu-pada-dhūli modera svarūpa
rāgānuga cintā-srotaḥ pravāhita hauk*

"Our eternal identity is to be specks of dust at the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Goswami. May the stream of *rāgānugā bhakti* flow forever.

*sapta-jihva kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana-yajña prati
anurāga haile habe sarva artha-siddhi*

"If we have enthusiasm for the seven-flamed fire of the sacrifice of Krishna sankirtan, then all purposes of life will be achieved.

*rūpānuga-jana-ānugatya kari sadā
rūpa-raghunātha vāñi pracāra sarvathā*

"Follow in the footsteps of the followers of Rupa Goswami and preach Sri Rupa and Sri Raghunath's message in any way that you can.

*bhaktivinoda-dhārā kabhu ruddha nāhi habe
bhaktivinoda-mano'bhīṣṭa sadā pracāribe*

"The line of service coming down from Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur will never be obstructed. Always preach that which was close to his heart.

*anurāga vā virāga-pātra keha nāhi bhabe
(jāgatika) ākarṣaṇa-vikarṣaṇātīta hate habe*

"No one in this world is worthy of your love or hate. You must transcend all material attractions and repulsions.

*kṛṣṇa-pāda-padma-sevā nitya-prayojana
tāhe lakṣya sthira rākhi jāpibe jivana*

"The true goal of life is service to the lotus feet of Krishna. Keep that aim clearly in your mind as you go through life.

*ekoddeśye aikātāne avasthita haye
mūlāśraya-vigraha seva jatana kariye*

"Keeping this single purpose in mind and working together, make the effort to serve Srimati Radharani—the original reservoir of love for Krishna.

*vipada gañjanā śata śata lāñchanāya
kabhu nāhi teyāgibe śrī-hari-sevāya*

"Let hundreds of dangers, insults or persecutions come, but despite them, do not ever give up your worship of Krishna.



*tṛṇāpekṣā hīna sahiṣṇu taru-sama
amānī mānada haye labe kṛṣṇa-nāma*

“Always chant the Holy Name while being more humble than the grass, as tolerant as the tree, respectful of all others and not desirous of any respect for yourself.”

*dayāmaya prabhupāda tava śeṣa vākya
karitechi anādara kari matānaikya*

O most compassionate Srila Prabhupada! These were your last words. I have not given myself sufficiently to following them and I even hold different opinions.

*tumi kṛpā kari modera hṛdaye basiyā
tavājñā pālana karāo śakti sañcāriyā*

Please be merciful to us and take up residence in our hearts. Give us strength so that we may follow your instructions.

*tava yaśo-gāthā gāhi sakale miliyā
tava mano' bhīṣṭa sevi eka-citta hañā*

May we all come together to sing your glories. May we be of one mind in serving your mission.

*śrī-caitanya-vāṇī viśve kariyā pracāra
tava sukha sādhi ei hauka vicāra*

May we only seek to bring you pleasure by preaching Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings throughout the world.

*tava kṛtī śiṣya madhye āmi to adhama
śikhāye śaraṇāgati karahe uttama*

So many disciples of your disciples have become accomplished; I am most insignificant. Please teach me how to surrender so that I may also be uplifted.

*lekhanī-dhāraṇe śakti deha he āmāre
kṛṣṇa-kārṣṇa guṇa jena pāri barnibāre*

Give me the strength to take up the pen, so that I may

glorify Sri Krishna and His devotees through writing.

*jihvāya sphurāo vāṇī kaṇthe uccasvara
guru-gaura-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāhi nirantara*

May the message of the Lord always appear on my tongue; may I loudly sing the qualities of Sri Guru, Gaurāṅga and Sri Krishna.

*prāṇavān bhakta-mukhe śrī-kṛṣṇa-kīrtana
śunite āgraha prabho kailā prakāṭana*

Krishna's names and glories can be sung by a devotee who is filled with life. O Master! You showed eagerness to hear such kīrtan.

*kintu je śaraṇāgati bhaktera prāṇa
kothā pāba sei prāṇa ki gāhiba gāna*

But where will I learn to take shelter and thus find this life of surrender so that I may effectively sing your glories?

*tabe jadi prabho more prāṇavān kara
prāṇa-hīna śaba-dehe śakati-saṅcāra
tabe ta gāhite pāri kṛṣṇa-guṇa-gāthā
sukhi hate pāra śuni prāṇavanta kathā*

If then, O Master, you fill me with divine life; if you fill this lifeless body with power—then I will be able to sing Krishna's glories. May I be able to make you joyful by reciting such life-filled discussions of Krishna for you.

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur-unmīlitaṁ yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

My eyes were blinded by the darkness of ignorance. I offer my obeisance to the spiritual master who has opened them with the collyrium of divine knowledge.

*namas te gaura-vāṇī-śrī-
mūrtaye dina-tāriṇe
rūpānuga-viruddhāpa-
siddhānta-dhvānta-hāriṇe*

O Lord, embodiment of Hari kirtan. You eliminate the darkness of spiritual misconception that obscure the teachings of Sri Rupa and his followers. I pay my obeisances to you again and again.

[First appeared in *Chaitanya Vāṇī*, 9.12 (Jan. 1970), pp. 267-71]



A Place at Your Lotus Feet

A humble offering to my spiritual master Om Vishnupada 108 Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur on his 34th disappearance day.

Gurudeva!

sudīrgha cautriśa varṣa modera chāriyā
nitya-līlā-rase magna ācho vraja-dhāme
vajra-sama hiyā tāi tomā pāsariyā
ekhano dharite cāi e chāra parāne

O Gurudeva! It has been a long thirty-four years since you left us and immersed yourself in the eternal pastimes of the Lord in Vrindavan. My heart must be as hard as stone, for I have forgotten you and yet I still hold on to this worthless life.

(āra) ke śunābe kṛṣṇa-kathā jatana kariyā
kṛṣṇa-vimukhatā hate kari sābadhāna
ke dibe abhaya-vānī sneha vitariyā
ātmāra carama-gati karābe sandhāna

Who now will take care to explain Krishna to us, warning us not to be indifferent to the Lord's service? Who will affectionately assure us not to be afraid? And who will direct us to the ultimate destination of the soul?

durdaiva āmāra prabho emani prabala
tava upadeśa-mantra nā pāri smarite
ki rūpe haibo mukta māyāra kabala
kṛṣṇa-bhakti kise pābo kṛṣṇa-pāše jete

O master! My misfortune is so great that I cannot remember the instructions you gave us. How can I get free of the clutches of Maya, and how can I get

devotion to Krishna so that I can go and join Him?

janaka janani āra ātmīya svajana
sabākāra kṛta snehe ache māyā-gandha
(kintu) tava snehe mukta kari māyāra bandhana
śrī-kṛṣṇa-bhajane deya dṛḍha anubandha

In this world, all the affection given us by our parents, or by our friends and families, is contaminated with the touch of illusion. Your affection, however, frees us from the bondage of matter and gives us the firm resolution to practice Krishna bhajan.

nāhi bujhi hāya tāhā māyāra vikrame
tava hita-ceṣṭā prati hai udāsina
diyāchi kata-i vyathā tomāra marama
ānkhi-nīre bhāsāyecho bakṣaḥ kata dina

Maya is so powerful, however, that I do not understand all this and so am indifferent to all the efforts you have made for my welfare. I must have touched your heart with so much pain, for your chest was covered with tears for many days.

adoṣa-daraśi prabho patita-uddhāra
mo-sama patita lāgi haiyā udaya
golokera dhana preme karite vistāra
sahile kata nā kaṣṭa ohe dayāmāya

O Prabhu! You see no fault in others and are the savior of the fallen. You appeared in this world for the sake of unredeemable souls like myself. O compassionate one, you underwent so much difficulty in order to spread the wealth of divine love of Goloka far and wide.

hari-kathā-amṛtera durbhikṣa-darśane
kālara hayeche tava komala hrdaya



(tāi) maṭha-mandirādi kata prakāśi jatane
pracāṛile śuddha-bhakti sarva-deśa-maya

Your soft heart was disturbed upon seeing the famine of nectarean Hari-kathā in this world. In order to remedy the problem, you constructed so many maṭhas and temples, preaching pure devotional service in every part of the country.

sthāne sthāne mudrā-yantra kariyā sthāpana
bhakti-grantha patrikādi vibhinna bhāṣāya
prakāśiyā hari-kathā kaile vitarāṇa
jaga-jane kariyācha kṛpā amāyāya

You established printing presses in various places and published devotional books and periodicals in different languages. In this way you distributed Krishna-kathā everywhere, open-heartedly giving your blessings to all the people of the world.

mūrtimatī gaura-kṛpā-śakti hao tumi
śrī-gaura-audārya-guṇe tāi guṇī hai'
prakāśile gaura-gāthā haiyā udyamī
ahaitukī kṛpā tava hena dekhi nāi

You are the embodiment of Gaurāṅga's compassionate energy; you possess His quality of benevolence. You made great efforts to explain Mahāprabhu to everyone; I have never seen causeless mercy such as yours anywhere.

bhāgavata pradarśinī tava āviṣkṛta
tāhā dvārā vistārāha bhakti-śāstra-sāra
susiddhānta tāhe raya hṛdaye aṅkita
alpāyāse haya baṛa susthāyī pracāra

You had the idea of making diorama exhibitions illustrating the Bhāgavatam as a way of making the essence of the devotional scriptures available to everyone, even the illiterate. When people see these exhibitions, the doctrines of all the scriptures become inscribed on their hearts and remain there. Thus with only a little effort, great preaching results are achieved.

daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma kari pravartana
bhakti-mārge nara-mātre dile adhikāra

tava upadeśāmṛta kariyā varāṇa
āpāmare labhiteche gaura-śikṣā-sāra

You conceived of a divine social system called *daiva-varṇāśram*, by which every single human being is given the qualifications to engage in devotional service. Even the most wretched humans could understand the essence of Mahāprabhu's teaching by listening to your nectarean instruction.

satye dhyāna tretāya yajña dvāpare arcana
kariyā je phala-lābha kariyāche nara
kali-yuge eka-mātra nāma-saṅkīrtana
hate sei saba labhya haya ataḥpara

The results that humans achieved from meditation in the Satya-yuga, sacrifice in the Treta-yuga, deity worship in the Dvāpara-yuga, can be achieved in the Kali-yuga by the chanting of the Holy Names alone. Therefore Harinam sankīrtan is the religious practice from this time on.

viśeṣataḥ ei dhanya kali-yuga-sāre
vraja-prema labhe jīva śrī-gaura-kṛpāya
śrī-nāme viśeṣa śakti kariyā saṅcāre
(sci) nāma-dvāre gaura prema jīvere bilāya

And this Kali-yuga is especially fortunate because every living being can attain ecstatic divine love by the mercy of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. He invested His holy names with a particular power so that through them He could distribute love to the people of the world.

(tāi) śata-koṭi nāma-japa-yajña samāpiyā
pratidina lakṣa nāma karecho grahaṇa
bhajana-ādarśa prabhu jīve dekhāiyā
śrī-nāma-bhajanotsāha karāha vardhana

Therefore you took up a vow to chant a billion Names, and after completing it, chanted at least a lakh every single day. This was the standard that you set in order to encourage all of us to engage in chanting the Holy Names.

(ābāra) nāma-sama dhāma-sevādarśa prakāṭiyā
(gaura-dhāma) mūla maṭha karile sthāpana



*śrī-caitanya-maṭha tāra nāma se ghosiyā
śrī-gauḍīya-maṭha nāma śākhā agāṇana*

Just as you served the Holy Name, you also displayed the ideal in serving the Holy Dham. In Mayapur, the home of Gaurāṅga, you established the headquarters of the numerous Gaudīya Maths, calling it Chaitanya Math.

*navadvīpa-dhāma parikramā ārambhile
pañca-mukhya bhakti aṅga jāhe sādhyā haya
gauda-vraja-kṣetra tina-maṇḍala bhramile
jāhān līlā kaila gaura-kṛṣṇa prema-maya*

You began the tradition of circumambulating Nabadwip Dham, saying that by so doing, everyone could engage in all the five main devotional activities. You visited all three of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas' holy lands where Kṛṣṇa and Mahāprabhu lived, Gauda, Vraja and Jagannath Puri.

*prthivī byāpiyā habe nāmera pracāra
ei gaura-mano'bhīṣṭa karile pūraṇa
patita-pāvana nāma sārthaka tomāra
sāgara-pāreo nāma kaile vitarāṇa*

Through you, Mahāprabhu's wish that the glories of the Holy Name be spread throughout the world became a reality. You sent preachers of the Holy Name across the ocean, thus your title, *patita-pāvana* ("savior of the fallen"), is most appropriate.

*śuddha-bhakti-pratikūla je je mata-caya
parama jatane tāhā karecho khaṇḍana
nirapekṣa naile dharma rakṣā nāhi haya
e veda purāṇe sadā karena kīrtana*

You took great care to show the inconsistencies in all the philosophical positions that oppose pure devotional service, for as the Vedas and Purāṇas claim, one cannot find the truth of religion unless one is impartial.

*barā-i durdina prabho bhārate ekhana
jaḍīya-sarvasva-vāda hayeche prabala*

*śāstra-dharma kichu nāhi māne jīva-gaṇa
tuccha jara-svārtha-tare hayeche capala*

Prabhu, now that you are gone a terrible calamity has befallen India. Materialism has become dominant and nobody respects the scriptures or religious principles any more. Everyone is busily scurrying about in search of their own petty selfish interests.

*dveṣa himsā mātsarya haiyā pūrta
hitāhita-jñāna-sūnya hayeche mānava
bhāye bhāye hatya-kāṇḍa dekhi viparīta
kṛṣṇa-māyā-mohe mugdha je hena yādava*

Everyone is filled with hatred, envy and jealousy. No one knows what is truly beneficial for the self and what is not. Everywhere we see fratricidal struggles, just as occurred amongst the Yādavas when they were under the influence of Kṛṣṇa's Maya.

*antarīkṣa hate prabho śakti sañcāriyā
rakṣa rakṣa jīva-gaṇe e ghora sañkate
kṛṣṇa-sevonumukha kara śuddha-buddhi diyā
svarūpera udbodhana kara niṣkapate*

O Prabhu, from your place in the spiritual sky, give us the energy to save the deluded souls in this terrible time. Make us favorable to Kṛṣṇa's service by giving us pure intelligence; awaken knowledge of our true identity.

*śrī-gaura-karūṇā-śakti tumi gaura-jana
gaurāṅgera priya gauda-gaurava rākhite
gaurecchāya hayechila tava āgamana
ābāra eso he nātha jīva uddhārite*

You are Gaurāṅga's personal associate and the manifestation of His compassionate potency. You are most dear to Gaurāṅga and have appeared to restore the reputation of Gauda, His land. O Lord, You came here once at Gaurāṅga's will, now please come once again to deliver the conditioned souls.

*uṭhuk jāguk jīva tomāra kṛpāya
udbuddha-svarūpe karuk kṛṣṇānusandhāna*



Of Love & Separation

nitya-kṛṣṇa-dāsa jīva kena vā māyāya
mugdha haye bhule rabe kṛṣṇa-guṇa-gāna

May all the jivas awake and rise up by your mercy. May they understand their true identity as Krishna's servants and seek Him out. Why do all these eternal servants of the Lord become bewildered by Maya and forget to glorify Him?

devatā-vāñchita ei bhārata-ajira
muni-ṛṣi-adhyuṣita vaikunṭha-prāṅgaṇa
jathā rājya kari dharma-rāja yudhiṣṭhira
aśvamedha rājasūya kareche yajana

Even the demigods seek birth in the land of Bharatavarsha, where the saints and sages dwelt. It is considered the anteroom to the spiritual world of Vaikuntha. It is here that the righteous emperor Yudhisṭhira reigned and performed the Rajasuya sacrifice.

veda-gāna-mukharita jāra tapo-vane
simha-śiṣu-sane krīḍā kareche bharata
dharma-kṣetra bali jāra prasiddhi bhuvane
sethā paiśācika nṛtya haya ki saṅgata

This land of India is where ascetics sang the Vedic hymns in the sanctity of the forests and where Bharata played with the lion cubs. Throughout the world, India is known as a pious land; is it then proper that such a demoniac dance should take place there?

yuge yuge je bhārate svayam bhagavān
sapārśade kata līlā kailā suvistāra
(tānra) śrī-carāṇa-cihna jathā āchaye amlāna
brahmādi-vandita jāra dhuli sārātsāra

In every age, the Supreme Lord Himself appears in this land along with His associates and performs extensive pastimes. The Lord's footprints marked this land and have not yet faded, thus Brahma and the gods worship the dust of this land.

sei pūta-dhūli pare eki vibhīṣikā
smariteo sarva aṅga uṭhiche śihari

eso prabho kṛpā kari karo dharma rakṣā
ghucāo bhārata-vyathā gāhiyā śrī-hari

My entire body shivers to even think that such horrors are taking place in this holy dust. O Master! Please come and restore the religious principles. Sing the glories of Krishna and free this land of Bharatavarsha from its pain.

kata aparādhi āmi o rāṅgā carāṇe
jñāta vā ajñāta-sāre kata doṣe doṣi
kata vyathā diyāchi o komala parāṇe
kṣama prabho saba doṣa adoṣa-daraśi

How many offenses I have committed to your lotus feet, either knowingly or unknowingly. How much pain have I caused your tender heart, please forgive me of all my offenses, for you do not take faults into consideration.

prāya pañcāśad varṣa labhiyā āśraya
bhajanera śudhu-mātra abhinaya kari
śuṣka maru-bhūmi tulya rahila hṛdaya
hāya hāya āra kabe bhajiba se hari

I took shelter of you nearly fifty years ago, but since then I have only made a pretense of engaging in bhajan. My heart remains as dry and arid as a desert. Alas, alas, when will I finally worship the Lord with sincerity?

tri-saptati-varṣa haila vayaḥ-krame mora
ekhano nā haya jadi nāme raga-leśa
tabe jāni nāhi kāte aparādha ghora
adrṣṭe āchaye bujhi durgati aśeṣe

I am now seventy-three years old and I still have no affection for chanting the Holy Name. Thus, I can understand that I have committed terrible offenses. I realize that I am suffering as a result of the fate that comes as the consequence.

(prabhu go) keṇde keṇde oṭhe prāṇa nāhi sānti pāi
kṛpā kari dāo sthāna abhaya-carāṇe
tomā vinā asamayera bandhu keha nāi
o pada bharasā mora jivane marāṇe



O my master! My heart cries out to you, for I have no peace. Please give me a place at your lotus feet. Without you, I have no friend in my time of need. Your service is my hope in life and death.

*aprakaṭco prakaṭa tumi cira-kāla
antarera vyathā tāi nivedi tomāre
sahite nāro to śantānera cakṣu-jala
doṣa kṣami o caraṇe rākha dayā kare*

Even after your disappearance from this world, you are always present. So I am telling you of the pain that I feel within me. You cannot stand to see all your children's tears, so please give me a place by your side, forgiving me of all my faults.

*prakaṭa-kāle o snehe hai ni vañcita
ajñāna adhama jāni kariyācho dayā
ekhano jānaha prabho tomāri āśrita
māgiche kātare tava śrī-caraṇa-chāyā*

When you were with us, you never held back your affection for me. Even though I am ignorant and lowly, you did not hesitate to show your compassion to me. Even now, I am still under your shelter alone and beg to remain in the cooling shade of your lotus feet.

*(śrī) rūpa-pada-dhuli jena janme janme hai
baliyā kata-i dainya karecha prārthanā
śiṣyero svarūpa prabho jānāyecho sei
anya kāmya nāhi rūpa-ānugatya vinā*

You yourself humbly prayed to remain a speck of dust at Sri Rupa Goswami's lotus feet. By so doing, you taught us about the true identity of your disciples as well. There is nothing more desirable than to follow in the path of Rupa Goswami.

*ei kṛpā kara prabho ohe dayāmaya
rūpa-raghunātha-pade jena thāke mati
lakṣa-nāma japa tava upadeśa haya
sadā jena sei nāma-jape bāre rati*

O most merciful master! Bless us that we too may always remain fixed at the feet of Sri Rupa and

Raghunath. You instructed us to chant a lakh of Holy Names every day, so I pray that I may always have the enthusiasm to do my japa according to this command.

*āśrayānugatye sabe miliyā miṣiyā
rūpa-raghunātha-vāṇi karite pracāra
antimecchā jānāyechaa kātara haiyā
kṛpā kari dāo śakti tāhā pālibāra*

In great anxiety, you told us your last wish: that we remain united in the service of the āśraya-vigraha, the devotees from the spiritual master up to Radharani, and preach the message of Sri Rupa and Raghunath. Please give us the strength to fulfill this command.

*bhaktivinoda dhārā ruddha nāhi habe
tānra manobhīṣṭa sabe sādha sābadhāne
ei icchā tava prabho apūrṇa nā rabe
gāhibe tānhāra jaya sakala bhuvane*

You also said that the stream of devotion coming from Bhaktivinoda Thakur shall never be dammed up and that we should dedicate ourselves to realizing his mission. O Master! This desire will not go unfulfilled; the entire world will sing his victory!

*tava śiṣya gaṇa madhye āmi to adhama
mo-sama ayogyā hata-bhāgya keha nāi
sarvato-bhāvete tāi kṛpā-pātra tava
jāni more śrī-caraṇe deha cira-ṭhāni*

I am the least amongst your disciples; there is no one as unworthy or unfortunate as myself. As a result, please consider me entirely deserving of your mercy and give me a permanent place at your lotus feet.

*luṭṭa-tīrthoddhāra, bhakti-śāstra prakāśana
śrī-mūrtira sevā, vaiṣṇavācāra pracāra
saba kailā jāhe sampradāya-saṁrakṣaṇa
sadācārya-varya tumi pūjya sabākāra*

You are the most worshipable example of what an acharya should be, preserving the teachings of the disciplic succession in reestablishing the holy places, publishing devotional literature, establishing the



worship of the deities and preaching the standards of pure and saintly behavior.

*svayaṁ sevya kṛṣṇa dhari sevaka mūrati
āpani ācari sevā jīvere śikhān
tāi jāni tumi kṛṣṇa-priyatama ati
bhr̥tya-bhr̥tya bali pada-tale deha sthāna*

The Supreme Lord Krishna takes the form of a servant, teaching the conditioned souls by his own example. You know this and so you are dearest to Krishna; and therefore I pray that you consider me the servant of your servants and give me a place at your lotus feet.

*śrī rādhā-nayana-maṇi kṛṣṇa-dāsa rūpe
ātmā-paricaya dāne tomāra ullāsa
tava dāsa-dāsa yogya kari laha more
sevā adhikāra diyā rākha nija-pāśa*

You joyfully revealed that you are the servant of Krishna, the cynosure of Radharani's eyes—Nayanamani. Please make me worthy to be the servant of your servant and, giving me the right to serve the Divine Couple, keep me always by your side.

Take me by the hand and lead me on the right path, so that I may find my way to Vrindavan. You are most merciful; you are the friend of the destitute, the purifier of the sinful. Never leave this lowly creature.

*śaraṇa lainu tava caraṇa-kamale
e dāsere kara dayā āpanāra bale*

I have taken shelter at your lotus feet. Now I ask you to bless me and call me your own.

bhavadīya cira-dāsānudāsa śrī-bhakti-pramoda-purī

The servant of your servant, Sri Bhakti Promode Puri

[From *Chaitanya Vāṇī* 10.11, (Dec. 1970), pp. 249-251.]





*"When the desire to serve the Lord manifests itself in the heart
then one can remember the Lord under all circumstances."*

Remembering Our Guru Through Bhajan

Scripture says *ājñā gurūnām hy avicāraṇīyā*—“The orders of the spiritual master are not to be debated.” The extent to which a disciple follows this instruction or advice is what defines his right to call himself a disciple. The efforts of a person who does not have an absolute commitment to this principle, but who seeks his own profit, adoration or prestige while offering lip service to it, is not a true disciple. Affection for the guru’s lotus feet increases proportionately to the effort the disciple makes to follow his directions. And in proportion to the pleasure the spiritual master feels at his disciple’s efforts, the disciple will feel the pain of divine separation in increasing amounts. This is the good fortune that comes from the spiritual master’s blessings; what is more, the mercy of Krishna also follows the blessings of the spiritual master.

When the sun has gone beyond the horizon of this whirling globe of matter called the earth, we say that it has set, knowing full well that it continues to blaze brightly beyond the range of our vision and that it will rise again. Krishna is the divine sun that never sets, the eternal self-effulgent truth. When He, out of His boundless mercy, decides to appear in this world in a way perceptible to humanity, taking birth and living a human life, then that is called His “visible” or *prakāṣa* manifestation. And when He decides to wind up His earthly pastimes and disappear from the vision of the world, we call this period of being unmanifest—*aprakāṣa-kāla*. The fact of the matter is that whether He is visible to us or not, He continues to exist eternally and uninterruptedly. The Lord’s pastimes in His eternal abode of Goloka or Vraja Dham know no interruption, for the Supreme Lord is eternally in play. The Sun rides through the sky on his chariot pulled by celestial horses and driven by

the godly charioteer, Aruna, appearing over one continent after another; just as he disappears from one continent, he appears in another and goes through the phases of the day there. Similarly, the lord of all the unlimited universes, Sri Krishna, always accompanied by His entourage of loving associates, enacts His lifetime of being born, engaging in various pastimes in His three homes of Vraja, Mathura and Dvaraka such as the Rasa-lila, killing the demon Kamsa, and marrying Rukmini and the other queens. But when all these wonderful events come to an end in this universe, they simply start up in another, somewhere else. So just as the differing phases of the sun are simply based on perception and do not affect the sun itself, Krishna’s human-like changes and differing pastimes in this world are to be recognized as appearance only. Nevertheless, Krishna’s pastimes are not illusory, but eternally true. This is what makes them extraordinary.

Krishna is the supreme truth in human form (*narākṛti param brahma*) and the Bhagavata speaks of His pastimes as *atimartyāṇi karmāṇi* (SB 1.1.20)—“superhuman actions.” The Bhagavata (1.3.35) also says:

*evam janmāni karmāṇi
hy akartur ajanasya ca
varṇayanti sma kavayo
veda-guhyāni hṛt-pateḥ*

“Learned men thus describe the births and activities of the unborn and inactive Lord of the heart, though they are hidden in even the Vedic literatures.” (SB 1.3.35)

The words “hidden in even the Vedic literatures” (*veda-guhyāni*) means not only that the Lord’s activ-



ities are confidential, but that they are supremely relishable.

The Lord Himself furthermore announces in the Gita that His birth and activities are beyond material limitations: *janma karma ca me divyam* (Gita 4.9). The ignorant materialist, being bewildered by the illusory energy, compares Krishna to himself. He therefore thinks that Krishna, the divine truth, the transcendental Cupid who mesmerizes the worldly gods of desire with His beauty, is an ordinary man under the influence of the same material energy and a slave to His lusts. The fact is that although Krishna appears in this world, He is never associated with its dualities like happiness and distress. This is what is meant by the mastery of the supreme master (*īśanam īśasya*—SB 1.11.38). The Lord is unaffected by the qualities of the material energy because He is beyond the material nature: *harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ* (SB 10.88.5).

In the same way that the Supreme Lord is beyond the perception of the material senses or *adhokṣaja*, being transcendental, immaterial, and eternal, the spiritual master belongs to the same transcendental, eternal, immaterial principle, for being the representative of the Lord, he is not different from Him. So though he may currently be invisible to our eyes, he is in fact eternally present; his pastimes are always *prakāṣa*. The only problem is that our eyes are currently blinded by the dust blown into them by the desire for material sense gratification and so we are unable to experience his presence. The relation with the spiritual master does not come to an end with death. He is our lord and master birth after birth. Just as a surrendered devotee does not take a single step without remembering that Krishna keeps and protects him, the surrendered disciple similarly always thinks of the guru as his protector and maintainer in every situation. Since Rupa Goswami stresses that taking shelter of the spiritual master is the beginning of devotional practice (*ādau guru-pādāśrayaḥ*—BRS 1.2.74), if we can think of the spiritual master in those terms, then we can rest assured that Krishna will indeed protect and maintain us. On the other

hand, if we neglect the guru, then we may call out Krishna's name for eternal time without His ever becoming merciful to us. This is why the Śrutis say:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanāḥ*

"All the truths found in the scriptures spoken by Krishna and His devotees are revealed to the great soul who has the highest devotion for both the Supreme Lord and the spiritual master in equal degree." (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

We should not imagine that we can even devote ourselves to the Supreme Lord a little more than we do to the spiritual master. This speculation about the relative worth of devotional objects is not condoned or approved by these words of the scripture: *yathā deve tathā gurau*—"as to the Lord, so to the spiritual master." Furthermore, such devotion is not restricted by time—it is to be carried on after the spiritual master's disappearance from this world just as it was during his presence in it. The conclusion is that we should expect to be forever deprived of the Supreme Lord's blessings if we let up even slightly in our adherence to the spiritual master's instructions.

When the spiritual master leaves the world, the Lord's eternal associates give him the title *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa*, meaning that he has gone to join them in the eternal abode. By this we should understand that if we in any way disregard this eternal associate of the Lord, especially when we remember that in the form of Nayanamani Manjari, he is directly engaged in the service of Srimati Radharani, the focus of all Krishna's love, then we should not expect the Divine Couple to take any of our efforts to display affection for them seriously. If Krishna gets angry with someone, then the spiritual master can intervene and pacify Him. On the other hand, the Lord does not care the slightest for someone who shows disrespect to the spiritual master. We should remember the way that the Lord Himself praised service of the guru to



His devotee, Sudama.

Service to the spiritual master—*guru-śuśrūṣā*—means attempting to fulfill the spiritual master's desires, just as Rupa Goswami fulfilled the desires of Sri Chaitanya. Just by wishing to fulfill his desires, Ramanuja caused the three crooked fingers of his spiritual master Yamunacharya's hand to straighten out. Such is the power of the desire to serve the guru.¹

Srila Prabhupada set the standard both in adhering to the principles of *nāma-bhajana* and in preaching. As far as bhajan is concerned, he unfailingly chanted 100,000 Holy Names every single day. But on the strength of such practice, he engaged in preaching; this was the standard that he expected of his disciples and can therefore be considered his *mano'bhīṣṭa*, or heart's desire. It is no credit to our spiritual master's true glories if we remain indifferent to this issue and simply engage in easily observable activities like deity worship, hoping to make a name for ourselves.

Our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada never said that deity worship was the ultimate devotional activity nor that the other aspects of devotional service were epitomized by the activity of *arcana*. Rather, he said the following: "The worship of the deity is generally in the category of worship in awe and reverence. The consciousness that one has is of offering respect with various elements to the worshipable Lord in the consciousness of his having materialised a form. Even though devotees engaged in the *rāgānugā* path may have dimmed the harsh sunlight of awe and reverence, no one can deny that it bears no comparison to the superiority of the cooling moon-rays of the mood of divine sweetness... Deity worship is never quite free of bodily consciousness, whether it is that of the gross or subtle identification. In the world of genuine bhajan, the practitioner engages in direct service to the Supreme Lord in a spiritual body. Being entirely free of any material identifications, all the senses of the truly devoted practitioner of bhajan are perceived as being non-material; they are engaged as in a service state beyond the mental platform and beyond time due to

proximity with the non-dual supreme substance."

At the same time, those who are unable to understand the distinction being made by Prabhupada in the above paragraph generally commit offenses to the Lord's deity form by considering it to be an idol: this is a hellish understanding, as stated by none other than Vyasadeva himself: *arce viṣṇau śilādhīr yasya nārakī saḥ*. So we must also pay special attention to not offending the deities. All the different forms of devotional service are achieved through the chanting of the Holy Names (*nava-vidhā bhakti pūrṇa nāma haite haya*). Srila Jiva Goswami has also stated that though other types of devotional activities are ordained in the age of Kali, they should be executed in the accompaniment of chanting: *yadyapy anyā bhaktiḥ kalau kartavyā tadā kīrtanākhyā-bhakti-sāmyogena*.

The offenses listed in the *Padma-purāṇa* include thinking of the deity to be nothing more than stone, the spiritual master as a mortal human being, to judge a Vaishnava by his caste or race, to think of the Ganges or the water that has washed the deity's or the Vaishnava's feet to be ordinary water, the names of the Lord to be mundane sounds or the Supreme Lord Vishnu on an equal level with the other demigods like Brahma or Shiva. Anyone who succumbs to these offensive ideas eventually sinks down to hellish life, so everyone should take care to avoid them.

To think of the spiritual master as an ordinary mortal is called *gurv-avajānā* and is a very destructive offense. The Supreme Lord is beyond the perception of the material senses; He is thus called *adhokṣaja*. The spiritual master is similarly *adhokṣaja*, meaning that he can never be bewildered nor touched by the material senses objects. Narottama Das demonstrated the way to pay respect to the spiritual master in the beginning of his *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*. He calls the spiritual master's feet the abode of pure devotion. There is absolutely no way to cross over the material ocean without the pleasure and blessings of the spiritual master.



Thakur Bhaktivinoda sings:

guru-kṛpā-jale nāśi viṣaya-anala
rādhā-govinda bala rādhā-govinda bala

“Extinguish the fire of sense-gratification with the water of the spiritual master’s mercy. Sing the names of Radha and Govinda! Sing the names of Radha and Govinda!”

Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur begins his famous prayer to the spiritual master with a similar metaphor, saying that the lotus feet of the spiritual master take on the characteristics of a rain cloud that puts out the blazing forest fire of material life with its showers of compassion. The spiritual master is often called an ocean of mercy; he suffers on seeing the sufferings of others. He distils the essence of the scriptures and gives it to the fallen conditioned souls. If he had not turned so many fallen souls like myself back from the path of sense gratification to that of pure devotional service, who knows to what depths we would have fallen?

In his *Anubhāṣya* to Chaitanya Charitamrita (1.4.21), Srila Prabhupada writes the following: “In the Chaitanya Charitamrita we read not only about *bhakti* and *śuddha-bhakti*, but also about *biddha-bhakti*, or blemished devotion. Thus, there are three types of devotion that need to be taken into consideration. Blemished devotion is that which still contains elements of other desires, is covered by other practices such as *jñāna* and *karma*, and cultivation of a consciousness of things other than Krishna, while dressing it all up as service to Krishna. *Biddha-bhakti* includes devotion that is mixed with fruitive activities, the intellectual approach to spiritual emancipation, with yoga or with various rituals having sense gratification as a goal. In other words, it contains activities that cannot be considered pure devotion. Service that is not blemished in this way, but follows the regulations of devotional service (*vaidhī bhakti*) is still considered devotion. It is completely distinct from *viddhā bhakti* and is filled with activities that are intended for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord.

Pure devotion is the name given to service done with deep desire following the mood of the eternally perfected associates of the Lord in Vrindavan; such service is not inspired by scriptural injunctions, but by spontaneous desire. So *vaidhī bhakti* is not mixed with other desires and is thus helpful to attaining pure devotion; however, when we speak of pure devotion, we mean *rāgānugā bhakti*. Such pure devotion is the highest degree of devotional practice, being characteristic of Krishna’s abode of Goloka. The other type of devotion, which has regulative principles as its basis, is found in Vaikuntha. One is spontaneous, loving and personal; the other, cautious, respectful and bound by etiquette.”

Krishna Das Kaviraj Goswami writes:

vrajera nirmala rāga śuni bhakta-gana
rāga-mārga bhaje jena chāri dharma-karma

“When the devotees hear about the pure devotion of the people of Vraja, then they worship on the *rāgānugā* path, giving up all varieties of religious duty.” (CC 1.4.33)

He then goes on to quote the Srimad Bhagavatam (10.33.36):

anugrahāya bhaktānām
mānuṣīm tanum āśritaḥ
bhajate tādṛśīḥ kṛdā
yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet

“The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna manifests Goloka’s *rāsa-līlā* in the material world in order to show His mercy to the devotees and all the creatures of the world. Anyone who hears of these wonderful pastimes will immediately engage in the Lord’s devotional service.”

The juxtaposition of these verses makes it seem that a pure devotee who has perfected the preliminary practices (*sādhana*) of devotional service is eligible to listen to the divine pastimes of the *rāsa-līlā*. Srila Prabhupada clarifies this point in his *Anubhāṣya*,



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“The activities of the Lord within the material universe are not within the grasp of the Prakṛita Sahajiyas. Because they have been set into motion by the Lord’s internal potency or Yoga Maya, Kṛṣṇa’s extraordinary pastimes such as the *rāsa-līlā* are not properly understood according to material standards. The Sahajīya school considers these activities to fall within the category of material sense gratification. They distort the meaning of phrases like *tat-paratvena nirmalam* or *tat-paro bhavet* as it appears in this verse, projecting their corrupt mental conception onto the divine pastime. Swallowed up by ignorance, those who are averse to the service of the Lord reject the transcendental nature of the Lord’s acts and view them with empirical eyes. They become completely absorbed by their desire for sense gratification, and thus distort the meaning of this verse. Those who confuse the state of perfection with that of practice become Prakṛita Sahajiyas. One should not base the interpretation of this verse on the optative form of the verb *bhavet*, concluding that this statement gives license to even the sense gratifier without respect to possessing the requisite qualifications. In this material world there is a question of duty and prohibition. Such regulations cannot possibly exist in Goloka Vrindavan. In that world, the passionate devotees of the Lord are governed by their greed for service and naturally find love for Kṛṣṇa in everything.”

The transcendental residents of Vraja possess a natural and overwhelming absorption or passion for their service to Kṛṣṇa. This passion is known as *rāga*; devotional service characterized by this mood is called *rāgātmikā bhakti*. The devotional service of a practitioner who aspires to this mood is known as *rāgānugā bhakti*. It is said that one becomes eligible for *rāgānugā bhakti* when he or she hears about the sweetness of the mood of Vraja residents’ spontaneous service and becomes eager to have it. A dependence on scriptural injunctions or logical arguments does not characterize one who is so eligible. *Rāgānugā bhakti* is practiced on two levels: in the body of a sadhaka who is free from the *anarthas*, and in the spiritual body or *siddha-deha*.

*bāhya antara ihāra dui ta sādhana
bāhye sādha-ka-dehe kare śravaṇa-kīrtana
mane nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvana
rātri-dine kare vraje kṣṇera sevana*

“*Rāgānugā bhakti* is practiced both externally and internally. In the external body, he acts as any other practitioner of devotional service and engages in hearing and chanting. In his mind, however, the devotee meditates on his spiritual body and serves Kṛṣṇa there in Vrindavan, day and night.”
(CC 2.22.151-2)

*sevā sādha-ka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokānusārataḥ*

“The devotee desiring intensely to attain the *rāgātmikā* mood of one or the other Vrajavāsī associates of Kṛṣṇa should engage in the practices of devotional service in his external body as a practitioner and internally in his spiritual body, in both cases following in the footsteps of the residents of Vraja.” (BRS 1.2.295; CC 2.22.153)

*nijābhīṣṭa kṣṇa-preṣṭha pācheta lāgiyā
nirantara sevā kare antarmanā hañā*

“In his mind, he constantly serves Kṛṣṇa while adhering closely to his favorite devotee, one who is most dear to the Lord.” (CC 2.22.154)

*kṣṇaṁ smaran janam cāsya
preṣṭham nija-samīhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau
kuryād vāsam vraje sadā*

“Remembering Kṛṣṇa and one of His dearest and closest devotees, one should constantly remain absorbed in hearing about their loving relations. In this way, one should make one’s permanent residence in Vraja.” (BRS 1.2.294, CC 2.22.155)

*ei mata kare jebā rāgānugā bhakti
kṣṇera caraṇe tāñra upajaya prīti*



“Whoever practices *rāgānugā bhakti* in this way develops love for Krishna’s lotus feet.”
(CC 2.22.160)

Srila Prabhupada writes in his commentary to this verse: “One who engages in service in the *sādhaka-deha*, by which is meant repeating or chanting the teachings he has heard or the service of kirtan, and also constantly meditates on serving Radha and Krishna in a spiritual body that is appropriate to such a purpose will attain an intense kind of love for the Lord through this transcendental greed. The first awakening of love as achieved through the *rāgānugā* path enchants Sri Krishna and this ultimately ends in one attaining loving service to Him.”

One develops the capacity to relish the tastes of the transcendental realm, its ever fresh, eternally life-giving ecstasies, by first transcending the material mental platform and rising to the effulgent platform of pure goodness. According to the teaching of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the practitioner who takes shelter of the Holy Names will be freed from all unwanted habits and tendencies, after which it is easy to enter the path of *rāgānugā bhakti*.

In his commentary on the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, Srila Prabhupada wrote: “The sixty-four activities of devotional service are assessed according to the division of *vaidhī* or *rāgānugā bhakti*. Prahlad’s definition of pure devotional service is found in the Bhagavatam. Mahaprabhu stated unequivocally that the chanting of the Holy Names is the best of all devotional practices.”

All perfections will come to us through the chanting of the Holy Name: *ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra*. The Holy Name mercifully bestows the ability to progressively relish Krishna’s name, His form, His attributes, His associates and finally, His sweet pastimes. Without the mercy of the Holy Name, we cannot taste these spiritual experiences.

*iṣat vikaśi punaḥ dekhāya nija-rūpa-guṇa
citta hari laya kṛṣṇa pāśa*

*pūrṇa vikaśita hañā vraje more jāya lañā
dekhāya nija svarūpa vilāsa*

“When the Name is even slightly revealed, it shows me my own spiritual form and characteristics. It steals my mind and takes it to Krishna’s side. When the Name is fully revealed, it takes me directly to Vraja, where it shows me my personal role in the eternal pastimes.” (*Kṛṣṇa-nāma dhare kata bala? Śaraṇāgati*)

Those unfaithful people who disbelieve the scriptures and commit offenses to the Holy Name never allow prema to enter their lives. Those who are free from the stupidity of atheism are known as wise and learned, or *dhīra*. The blessings of the Holy Name are so powerful that when such a wise and learned person hears about such pastimes as Krishna’s *rāsa-līlā* from his spiritual master, which even Narayan’s consort Lakshmi Devi is unable to comprehend, then he quickly obtains the ability to chant constantly himself and, eventually, attains the love of God that destroys any vestiges of material desire that remain in his heart.

Krishna’s pastimes with the gopis are incomprehensible to someone who depends on scriptural injunctions and logical arguments to engage in devotional service; one has to follow the transcendental path of the gopis themselves. These are the indications found in the Bhagavata in the verse beginning with *vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ* (10.33.42).

The most merciful and worshipable Srila Prabhupada was so kind that he advised conditioned souls like ourselves, whose hearts are filled with all kinds of unwanted desires, to avoid prematurely getting involved in discussing such topics and to simply throw ourselves at the mercy of the Holy Name. The idea is that one should harbor the powerful desire to attain that goal (on the theory that one attains the perfection one seeks—*yādṛśī bhāvanā yasya siddhir bhavati tādrśī*) and chant the Holy Name according to the spiritual master’s instruction.

If we cannot follow Srila Prabhupada’s instruction to



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chant 100,000 Names every single day without offenses, even a fourth of that amount has a positive affect and quiets the mind. And yet there are those who do not even chant that amount and still think that they can engage in discussions of the Lord's divine pastimes in the hope of being able to relish them. This is pure arrogance!

In the meantime, my life is slowly being wasted. The sun of my life is on the point of setting. My hand trembles and I find it difficult to hold a pen to write and my memory is beginning to fail me. It makes me think of the Bengali verse:

*vrddha-kāla āola sab sukha bhāgala
pīrā-vaṣe hainu kātara
sarvendriya durbala kṣīṇa kalevara
bhogābhāve duḥkhita antara*

“Old age has come and all joy has left. I have become subject to all kinds of ailments. My body is waning and my senses are weak. The worst thing is that I am saddened by my inability to enjoy sense gratification.”

O Srila Prabhupada, you are the true shelter of those who know no other resort. For someone as worthless as me, there is no salvation other than your causeless mercy. You instructed me privately in the mantra, told me to chant the Holy Names without offenses, and to keep my mantra secret—but I have not been able to follow these instructions properly. There is no *puraścaraṇa* other than service to the spiritual master; without such service, there can be no perfection of the mantra, the deity of the mantra does not give his blessing or reveal Himself. Without having properly served my spiritual master and thus developed the power of the mantra, I have initiated so many unqualified people and thus committed offenses.

One day in Puri Dham, Gadadhar Pandit Goswami himself warned us about this by asking Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to reinitiate him. He said to the Lord, “Ever since I revealed my mantra to someone I have been unable to properly concentrate on it any more. If You repeat the mantra to me, my mind will be calmed again.”

The Lord answered him, “If I were to do this, you would become an offender to your initiating spiritual master, so be careful. This has nothing to do with my affection for you. I would not only give you a mantra, but would give you My life, but it is considered inappropriate to act in this way as long as your spiritual master is alive.”

Gadadhar suggested, “My spiritual master is not present here. Can you not act in his place?”

The Lord answered, “Your guru, Pundarika Vidyanidhi, will soon arrive in Puri. When he does, he will do as you have asked.” (CBh 3.10.23-28)

Within ten days, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's omniscience was proved when Pundarika Vidyanidhi arrived in Puri Dham and Gadadhar's desire was fulfilled by hearing the mantra a second time from his guru. (CC 3.10.79)

In this connection, Srila Prabhupada commented: “The mantra is the sound representation of the Param Brahma that is received for the purpose of overcoming the contemplation of sense gratification. Whenever a spiritual master instructs a disciple in the mantra, he is affected by a degree of contamination entering in him. If one's state of spiritual realization (*divya-jñāna*) is weakened through association with materialistic persons, then one must make every effort to revive that position. Gadadhar Pandit was aware of this and so he asked Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to repeat the mantra to him. Mahaprabhu, however, deemed that Gadadhar should go to his spiritual master, Pundarika Vidyanidhi.” (Gaudiya-bhāṣya to Chaitanya Bhāgavata 3.10.24)

*kṛṣṇa āmāya pāle rākhe jāne sarva-kāla
ātma-nivedana-dainye ghucāya jañjāla*

“A surrendered devotee knows that Krishna protects him at all times. By giving himself to Krishna in humility, he is free from all life's difficulties.”

The spiritual master is also the manifestation of Krishna Himself, and so he too acts as the protector



and maintainer of his disciple. I therefore pray to my spiritual master that I may always think of him as my worshipable deity, and that by his grace I may always worship the fearless, ambrosial feet of Sri Guru-Gauranga-Gandharvika-Giridhari. O Gurudeva! Do not deprive me of your mercy! Protect and maintain me always; free me of all impurities; forgive all my offenses and any mistakes or errors I have made. Give this most unfortunate soul a permanent place at your lotus feet. Make me the servant of your servants. Give me the capacity to serve you and make this life of mine successful.

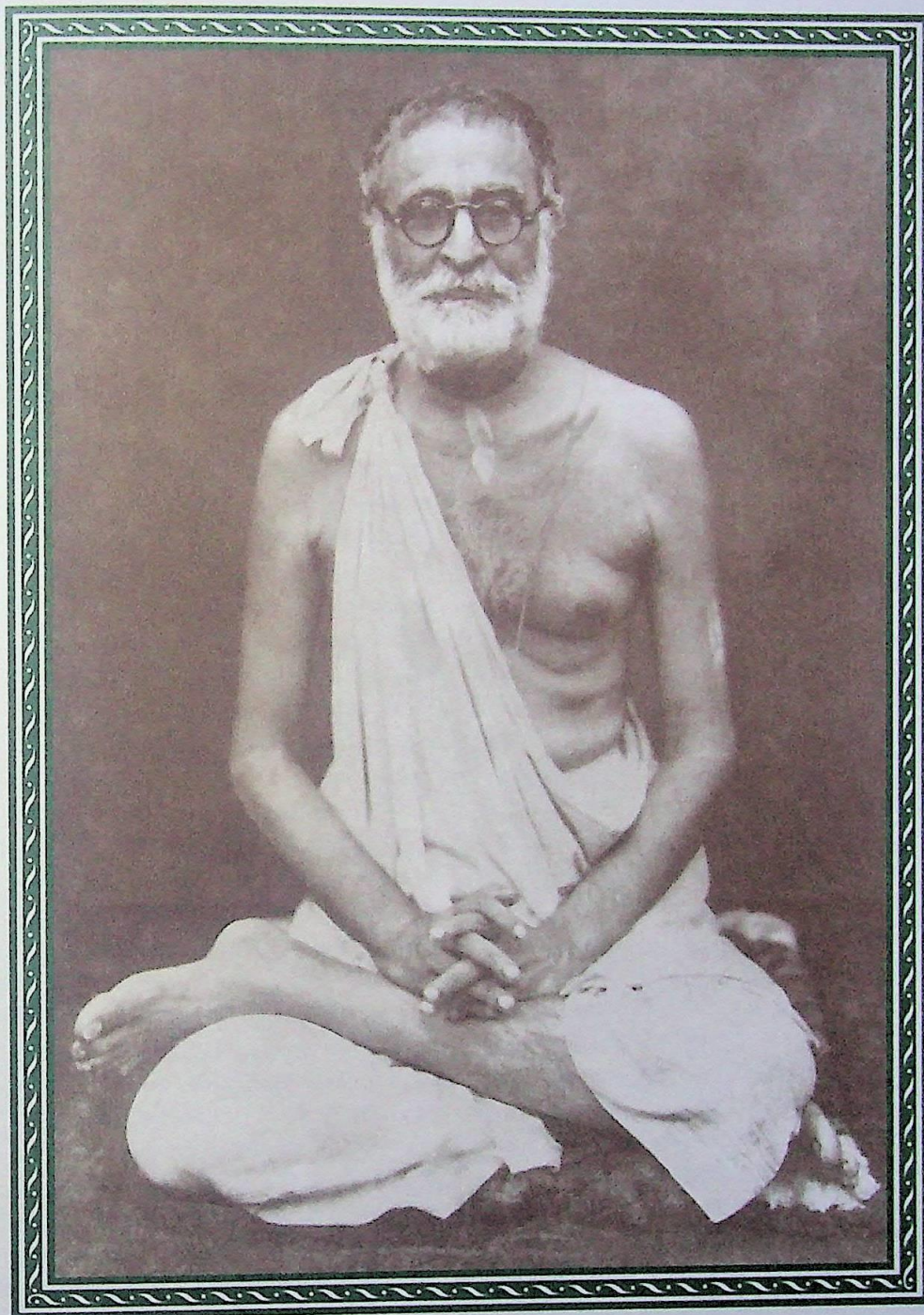
On the day before you departed from this world, you made me so fortunate by placing your lotus feet on my chest. May those feet, as cooling as a million moons, remain there eternally. May I worship them always in my heart. Though I am completely unworthy, I beg of you that you bestow this causeless mercy on me.

*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatih kuto'pi
dhyāyan stuvāms tasya yaśas trisandhyam
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

"I worship the lotus feet of my spiritual master, meditating and glorifying them thrice daily, for through his blessings we receive the blessings of the Lord, but without his blessings we are without hope."
(*Gurvaṣṭaka* 8)

¹ Yamunacharya was looking for someone capable who could write a commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras, presenting the Sri Vaiṣṇava position. He also wanted commentaries to be written on the Tamil Veda and the Bhagavad Gita.





*"My prayer to you all is that you be united and serve the Lord together
in a spirit of friendliness and cooperation, sharing this same ideal in your heart."*

About the Author



In the early years of this century, Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur set into motion a devotional revival that rapidly spread through Bengal, India, and eventually the world. He put into question the very foundations of present-day theistic thought in a way that has little comparison anywhere in the spiritual record, East or West. Through him, the world was awakened to the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the movement of pure devotion, *śuddhā bhakti*.

In orchestrating this modern bhakti revolution, Srila Prabhupada gathered some of the greatest spiritual luminaries in contemporary history into his circle. Such a convergence of exalted spiritual personalities can only be compared to the coming together of Sri Chaitanya's direct followers in the sixteenth century. One of the devotional giants who entered Srila Prabhupada's orbit was the author of this book, His Divine Grace Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj.

We cannot describe the life of Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj without emphasizing his contribution to the spiritual movement in which he was so integrally involved. The depth of his accomplishments cannot be fathomed outside the context of Sri Gaudiya Math. With his fellow godbrothers, he shared an indomitable faith in the service of his Guru and the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. This service was the sole purpose and highest aspiration of his being. This conviction

led him to spend his entire life in the pursuit of Srila Prabhupada and Mahaprabhu's pleasure and the fulfillment of their desires. If we examine his life in this setting, we will see more than just numbers, dates, places and names. We will see how he embodied the very life current that his spiritual preceptors came to give the world.

Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj took birth in the village of Ganganandapur in Jessore district (in present-day Bangla Desh), on October 8, 1898. His parents, Tarini Charan Chakravarti and Srimati Ram Rangini Devi, named him Sri Promode Bhushan Chakravarti. During his childhood, he met his *varṇa-pradarśaka guru* ("one who opens the door to the path of devotion"), Srila Bhakti Ratna Thakur, a godbrother and *siksha* disciple of Thakur Bhaktivinoda, the legendary architect of the present Gaudiya Vaishnava movement. Through Bhakti Ratna Thakur he was introduced to Sajjana-tosāṇī, Bhaktivinoda Thakur's own Vaishnava periodical, which was filled with Bhaktivinoda's commentaries and holy teachings. In this way Srila Puri Maharaj became familiar with the seminal works of the *śuddhā bhakti* tradition, such as Chaitanya Charitamrita, Chaitanya Bhagavata and the Srimad Bhagavatam. It was also through Bhakti Ratna Thakur that he first learned of his future guru, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada.

Srila Puri Maharaj was still a young university student



when he first came before Srila Prabhupada at the Yoga Pith in Sri Mayapur in 1915. It was a significant occasion, for Srila Prabhupada's diksha guru, Paramahansa Thakur Srimad Gaura Kishor Das Babaji, had entered his eternal abode only the day before. Srila Puri Maharaj often recounted that as soon as he saw Srila Prabhupada and paid his obeisances to him for the first time, he knew in his heart that this was his spiritual master. Some years later, on the auspicious day of Sri Krishna Janmastami in 1923, he accepted both Harinam and mantra diksha from Srila Prabhupada and was given the name Pranavananda Brahmachari.

At the time, Sri Gaudiya Math was rapidly establishing itself as a bona fide manifestation of Indian religious culture and transforming the caste-conscious socio-religious world of Hinduism. Srila Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur was bringing together his intimate associates to share the wealth of Sri Krishna sankirtan. He had accepted tridandi sannyasa in 1918 and by the early 1920's had already assumed a formidable position in the Bengali spiritual firmament. He was fearless when it came to upholding true religious principles. The students and practitioners of the Gaudiya Math aligned themselves with this attitude and led most exemplary lives of devotion, imbued with austerity, discipline and in-depth scriptural learning. This high standard of religious life was the hallmark of Sri Gaudiya Math and would be the thread that guided all of Srila Prabhupada's disciples, including Srimad Puri Goswami Maharaj.

The keystone of success in devotion is to perfectly hear the holy words spoken by one's spiritual preceptor. Srila Prabhupada would often say, "All that is required of you is that you lend me your ears." Srila Puri Maharaj was fully committed to this maxim. He had the great good fortune to associate closely with Srila Prabhupada for thirteen years and during that time he served him personally by recording his lectures and conversations, which were later published. The greater part of Srila Prabhupada's spoken words we are left with today come from the transcriptions of these notes. At the same time, Srila Puri Maharaj cultivated a deep knowledge of the Vaishnava scriptures, with the result that he became a veritable storehouse of the wealth of the preceptorial

line coming from Sri Chaitanya and his followers. This led him to become one of the most prolific writers and influential teachers in all of Gaudiya Vaishnava history. His writings reflect the disciplined eye of a scholar who expresses with grace and directness the purest scriptural conclusions supported by his own uncommonly profound realization.

Following Srila Prabhupada's directives, our Gurudeva edited, wrote for, published and helped distribute countless spiritual publications. He was initially inspired and directed by Srila Prabhupada to start writing and contributing articles to the Gaudiya magazine, the backbone of the Gaudiya Math's missionary work. For seven years he served as a proofreader and as one of its primary editors. In 1926, he was charged with running the world's only daily Vaishnava newspaper, *Dainika Nadiya Prakasha*. He held this service for two years, publishing all of his preceptor's daily discourses along with articles by fellow students and other contemporaries. His service and learning did not pass unnoticed by Srila Prabhupada who awarded him the titles of *mahā-mahopadeśaka* ("great instructor") and *pratna-vidyālaṅkāra* ("keeper of the wisdom of the ancient scriptural lore").

After the disappearance of his Gurudeva in 1937, Srila Puri Maharaj continued his vocation of spreading the teachings of Sri Chaitanya through the Gaudiya magazine, first out of the Bagh Bazaar Gaudiya Math and then later the Sri Chaitanya Math in Mayapur. After he founded the Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj's godbrother, Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaj, invited him to head the editorial board of *Chaitanya Vāṇī* magazine in 1964. Puri Maharaj served in this capacity for thirty-three years, furthering his life's work of preserving the teachings of his spiritual lineage. Through *Chaitanya Vāṇī*, he continued to make a deep impact on the devotional world.

In all, our venerable teacher's wisdom is embodied in over sixty years of writings on Vaishnava philosophy and theology. He penned a rich variety of texts, bringing the Bhagavata dharma to life through hundreds of poems, essays, narratives, diaries, editorials and person-

al letters, thus creating a storehouse of the wealth of pure devotion for his disciples and the world at large.

In 1942, Srila Prabhupada appeared to Srila Puri Maharaj in a dream vision and imparted to him the san-nyas mantra, ordering him to accept the renounced order. After accepting tridandī-sannyāsa from his god-brother Bhakti Gaurava Vaikhanasa Maharaj in Champahati in August of 1946, he toured parts of India with other godbrothers such as Bhakti Hriday Bon Maharaj and Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaj. In the meantime, he continued to write and lecture with dedication. At the behest of his godbrother Tridandi Swami Bhakti Vilasa Tirtha Maharaj, he also served for seven years as chief pujari for the Yoga Pith temple, the birth-site of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Srila Puri Maharaj took up a more solitary life of worship in the 1950's. He moved to a humble cottage on the banks of the Ganges in Ambika Kalna. The king of Burdwan was extremely impressed by his saintly ascetic character and, on the appearance day of Srimati Radharani in 1958, presented him with the ancient Ananta Vasudeva temple in Kalna.

In 1989, at the age of 91, Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj established the Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math in Ishodyan, Sri Mayapur, for the service of their divine lordships, Sri Sri Gaura-Gadadhar, Jagannath Deva, Radha-Gopinath and Lakshmi-Narasingha Deva. In the following years, he established other temples in Jagannath Puri, Vrindavan, Calcutta and Midnapore.

Srila Puri Maharaj taught through his every action. He excelled in all aspects of devotional practice and there was perhaps no area in which he did not exhibit utmost expertise, diligence and foresight. This ranged from his encyclopedic knowledge of scripture, to maintaining the printing press, to his beautiful singing of kirtan. He was especially recognized for his sensitivity and attention to detail in the performance of deity worship and devotional rites and was thus widely called upon to be the head priest in most of the Gaudiya Math's deity installations and ceremonial functions. He was rarely known to rest; his service was an uninterrupted flow.

Even in his later years, he would remain awake, writing and chanting through the night while all his youthful disciples were still asleep. When his personal servants came in the morning, they would inevitably find him awake and chanting the Holy Name, arisen before everyone else in the ashram.

Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Maharaj had outstanding love for his godbrothers and was inspired in his glorification of others. He found richness in everyone he met. He had the quality of making one feel so much wanted and their life so much valued. At the same time, he paid the least attention to himself. He was an emblem of humility and simplicity, and his generosity of spirit and kindness touched the hearts of the whole Vaishnava community. Among his lifetime, intimate companions were Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Deva Goswami Maharaj, Srila Bhakti Prajnan Keshava Maharaj, and Srila Akinchan Krishna Das Babaji Maharaj. Toward the end of his sojourn in this world, he was honored by the Gaudiya Vaishnava community for his learning, long life of service and devotion and made president of the World Vaishnava Association in 1995.

"He has love for his Guru; and let it be known that his life is one with his words." This tribute, coming from Srila Prabhupada himself, is the most revealing statement about Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj's personality and qualities. He gave credit for all of his accomplishments to the mercy of his Gurudeva alone. Through the blessings of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Maharaj attracted the hearts of so many to the Bhagavata religion. People from so many different backgrounds and countries found in him a true spiritual guide and shelter. He upheld the principles of pure Vaishnavism and delineated the path of śaraṇāgati. He so embodied pure devotion and service to his spiritual master that one of his disciples once remarked that he was able to "silently lay down Srila Prabhupada's entire siddhanta."

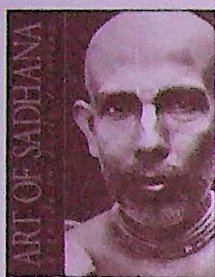
We are greatly indebted to His Divine Grace for his gift—a lifetime of pure devotion, spanning over a century, which we can aspire for, learn from, and discuss about for our own spiritual nourishment. Srila Puri

Maharaj departed this world for the eternal abode in the predawn hours of Narayan Chaturdasi, October 21, 1999, one day before the Rasa Purnima. His divine body was transported from Jagannath Puri to the Gopinath Gaudiya Math in Ishodyan and there placed in his eternal samadhi shrine. Prior to his departure from this world, Srila Puri Goswami Maharaj appointed his intimate disciple, Sripada Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj as his successor and President-acharya of Sri Gopinath Gaudiya Math.

In years to come as more of his words and vision are translated, the world outside of Bengal and India will come to know the spirit of the true Vaishnava religion that he tirelessly shared. May the gentle rain of nectar of his perfect teachings continue to bring auspiciousness into this world.



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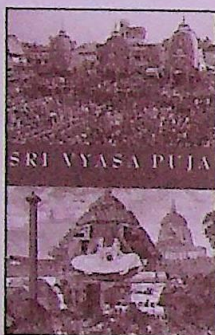
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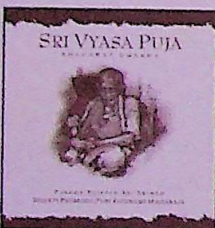


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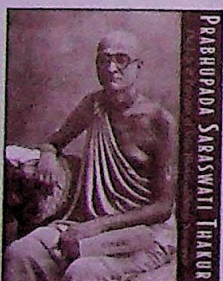
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